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CERTAIN QUESTIONS OF STRATEGIC DEFENSIVE IN GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 6, Jun 1986 (signed to press 23 May 86) pp 9-16

[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Docent, Maj Gen A. P. Maryshev, published under the rubric "Soviet Military Art"]

[Text] During the prewar years it was felt that the main type of military operations for the Soviet Armed Forces would be the strategic offensive. Our military doctrine rightly proceeded from the view that only by decisive offensive actions involving all of the Armed Services and branches of troops would it be possible to defeat the aggressor and achieve the goals of the war. At the same time, the defensive was also recognized as valid. This was viewed as a temporary and enforced type of military action which the Soviet Army could employ with a disadvantageous military-political situation and an unfavorable balance of forces. Here in theory chief attention was paid to elaborating the questions of organizing and conducting defensive actions of the troops on the operational and tactical scale.(1)

However, under the conditions of the surprise attack by previously mobilized and deployed armed forces of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Army was forced from the very first days of the war to conduct a defensive along the entire Soviet-German Front. Here the strategic defensive at the outset of the war was organized, as a rule, in the course of the enemy's active offensive operations, in a situation of incomplete strategic deployment and in the absence of previously prepared defensive lines. Without possessing sufficient time for organizing the defenses, the troops of the fronts were forced to conduct defensive operations in broad zones with predominant superiority for the enemy in tanks and aviation, particularly on the axes of the main thrusts.

The unsuccessful outcome of the defensive operations of the Soviet troops on the Voronezh sector and in the Donbass in the summer of 1942 entailed the breaching of the defenses on the southern wing of the strategic front. The broad breach was employed by the enemy for developing the offensive against Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Thus, the strategic defensive for the second time during the war became the basic type of military actions of the Soviet Armed Forces. But the increased art of organizing the strategic defensive and the change in the balance of forces in favor of the Soviet Army led to a

situation where, from the summer of 1942, the enemy was forced to restrict itself to the offensive only on individual strategic axes.

The defensive operations during the 1942 summer-autumn campaign on the southern wing of the strategic front were conducted under different, less difficult conditions than at the outset of the war. The defensive on the main sectors had a series of engineer-organized zones. In addition, in the interior of the nation rear defensive lines were built on the most dangerous sectors. Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] and the command of the fronts possessed the necessary reserves.

In the course of the war, the forms of strategic defensive underwent further development. The experience of the very first front-level defensive operations showed that with the forces of a single field force it was impossible to halt the offensive of an enemy strategic grouping. For this reason from August 1941, the main form of strategic defensive was an operation by a group of fronts representing a complex of operations and engagements conducted by the forces of the field forces and formations of the various Armed Forces and branches of troops.

In the 1942 summer-autumn campaign, each strategic defensive operation involved, as a rule, two or three fronts. The operations were conducted in a zone of from 250 to 800 km wide. Their depth varied from 150 to 500 km. By the start of such operations, the groupings of Soviet troops numbered from 500,000 to 1.5 million men, 3,000-6,000 guns and mortars, 400-800 aircraft and 600-2,400 tanks.(2)

The experience of the war showed that within the defensive operations by groups of fronts, greater opportunities were apparent for pooling the efforts of the forces of the Armed Services and branches of troops involved in it and more effectively coordinating their actions under a single command.

For achieving the set goals in a situation when the enemy offensive was carried out on a number of sectors, the need arose of conducting within the defensive campaign several strategic defensive operations not only along the front but also in depth. For example, on the western sector the Soviet troops in 1941 conducted defensive operations in Belorussia as well as the Smolensk and Moscow Operations.

The experience of the first operations clearly showed that the most important problem of the strategic defensive was the achieving of its stability. The solution to this was predetermined primarily by the prompt detection of the enemy's plans and the correct determining of the axes of its main thrusts, by the maneuvering and skillful massing of men and weapons on these axes, by the prompt preparation of defensive lines, by the wide employment of obstacle-constructing means, by maintaining continuous cooperation and stable troop control.

The prompt detection of the direction of the enemy's main thrust and its intentions determined the decisions to be taken for organizing the strategic defensive, that is: the allocating of men and weapons to the sectors, the strengthening of the operational fronts, the composition and concentration

areas of the strategic reserves, the constructing of defensive lines and so forth. Mistakes in assessing the enemy's plans greatly impeded the achieving of the aims of the defensive, since the shifting of efforts from one sector to another under the conditions of an already commenced offensive entailed a major regrouping of the troops and a loss of time. Thus, on the eve of the war, it was assumed that the Nazi Army would launch its main thrust on the southwestern sector, where the main forces of the Soviet troops were concentrated. Only in the course of the battle engagements did the Soviet High Command conclude that the enemy had concentrated its main efforts on the western (Minsk--Smolensk--Moscow) sector and this naturally created additional difficulties involved with shifting the focus of efforts. Subsequently, Hq SHC kept this sector at the center of attention.

To here were sent the strategic reserves from the interior of the nation and resources were shifted here from other sectors of the front. Defensive lines and man-made obstacles were established first on the axes of advance of the enemy assault groupings. However, the delayed decision to go over to the defensive greatly impeded the carrying out of these measures.

In the 1942 summer-autumn campaign, we also succeeded in determining the axis of the main thrust of the Nazi troops only with the start of their offensive. For establishing a stable defense and for restoring and stabilizing the front, it took an extended time and enormous effort involving the shifting of reserves from the western to the southwestern sector. The enemy again succeeded in capturing great territory.

In contrast to the previous defensive campaigns, in the spring of 1943 the summer plans of the Nazi leadership were detected long before the start of the offensive being prepared. The Soviet Command, having correctly determined the axis of the main thrust by the Wehrmacht troops toward Kursk, was able to carefully plan and prepare the defenses. A defensive grouping was established ahead of time, several defensive lines up to 300 km deep were equipped in engineer terms, (3) major reserves were accumulated, the necessary work was done to train the command, the staffs and the troops, and a large range of measures was carried out for operational camouflage. This made it possible to repel the enemy's strikes, to deal it a quick defeat and establish conditions for going over to a counteroffensive.

In the course of defensive operations, the engineer organization of the terrain continued to be improved. In the 1941 summer-autumn campaign, due to the lack of the necessary time and forces on the fronts, usually only the main zone was equipped. By a decision of Headquarters rear defensive lines were established ahead of time in the rear of the defending troops of the fronts. For example, under the threat of a breakthrough by the advancing enemy troops to Moscow, the Mozhaysk Defensive Line was organized. Upon the decision of the GKO [State Defense Committee], the Moscow Defensive Zone was organized on the immediate approaches to the capital. Its engineer organization included an external defensive perimeter (the forward security area) and three city perimeters: the first along the Moscow Circular Railroad, the second along the Sadovoye Ring and the third along the Boulevard Ring and the Moscow River. In addition, in November and the beginning of December 1941, a rear defensive

line was organized along the line of Vychevda, Vologda, Yaroslavl, Gorkiy, Stalingrad, Astrakhan.

The increased effective and numerical strength of the fronts and the armies and the increased equipment made it possible to constantly increase the depth of the operational defense and establish higher operational densities. In the 1942 defensive operations, in addition to the main zone, at a distance of 20-25 km from the forward edge on individual sectors an army defensive line was prepared and at a depth up to 30 km areas defended by combined-arms and special reserves were established. Areas for the deployment of the front reserves were prepared on the front at a depth of 40-50 km and front lines were engineer organized some 75-150 km from the forward edge. While by the start of the Battle of Moscow, the depth of the engineer-organized defenses on the sector of the enemy's main thrust reached 200-400 km, in 1942, considering the rear line along the Volga, this was 600 km.(4)

Man-made obstacles played a major role in achieving a stable defense. Upon instructions of Headquarters, at the end of June and in July 1941, on the western sector they organized and began operating three obstacles construction detachments (each with two or three combat engineer battalions equipped with vehicles and a supply of mines and explosives). These set mixed minefields on the main likely tank approaches and blew up bridges and other important facilities thereby impeding the enemy's advance. On 19 November 1941, upon instructions of Headquarters, for building obstacles on the right wing of the Western Front an engineer operations group was organized consisting of six combat engineer battalions. In November, this group set and reset 52,600 mines (257 minefields) and blew up 212 bridges on the enemy's routes of advance.(5)

In the course of the war, the strategic defensive by the Soviet troops had an active nature. The holding of the defensive lines was combined with the launching of counterstrikes. Within the strategic defensive, particular offensive operations were also carried out. Thus, in the period of conducting the defensive operations on the southwestern sector in the summer of 1941, as a result of the counterstrikes by the mechanized and rifle corps (in the areas of Rovno, Brody, Novograd-Volynskiy, Berdichev), the Nazi Army Group South suffered serious losses, its offensive was held up for more than a week and the plans to surround and destroy the main forces of Soviet troops to the west of the Dnieper were thwarted.

By the end of August 1942, when the enemy succeeded in breaking through to the Volga to the north of Stalingrad, formations of the 63d, 21st, 1st Guards and 4th Tank Armies launched a series of counterstrikes from the north, they captured and widened bridgeheads on the right bank of the Don, thereby significantly easing the situation of the troops engaged in defensive battles in the city.

However, the initiated counterstrikes by the fronts and armies did not always produce the desired results. This occurred as a consequence of the fact that the commanders and staffs often made substantial mistakes in organizing combat. The counterstrikes were launched with weak forces which in addition were frequently committed to battle piecemeal. The counterstrike groupings in

many instances advanced in broad zones, dissipating their forces along the entire front. Instead of flank attacks against the base of the enemy groupings which had broken through, frequently frontal attacks were launched against enemy troops which were in order and not neutralized by fire.

As a whole, regardless of the limited territorial and operational success, the counterstrikes played an important role in conducting the strategic defensive. In tying down large forces, in distracting the enemy reserves from the main axes to secondary ones and in slowing down the rate of advance, they made it possible to gain time necessary for stiffening the defenses on the most dangerous sectors.

The war showed that for achieving success of a counterstrike it was essential to establish superiority over the enemy on the sector where this was carried out, to concentrate the troops promptly and secretly, to assign time for preparations, to organize well the command and all-round support and correctly determine the time and the method for launching the counterstrike. The greatest effectiveness was achieved in those instances when it was made by surprise, with maximum activity of the defending troops, against both or one of the flanks of the enemy grouping which had broken through and simultaneous resistance from the front. This also demanded high art in organizing cooperation of all the men and weapons assigned for the counterstrike.

The activeness of the strategic defensive was also expressed in the fact that at a time when a stubborn defensive was being conducted on one strategic sector, offensive operations were carried out on others with limited tasks. Thus, in the course of the Smolensk Strategic Defensive Operation, in the aim of distracting enemy forces from the main and most dangerous sector, offensive operations were organized and carried out by the troops of the 21st Army and a cavalry group on the Bobruysk sector as well as an offensive by the 24th Army of the Reserve Front in the Yelnya area.

The partial offensive operations carried out at Leningrad, in the areas of Demyansk, Rzhev and Voronezh in 1942, during the period of the heavy defensive engagements on the Stalingrad and Caucasian sectors made it possible to tie down large groupings of Nazi troops. For this reason the Wehrmacht High Command was forced at the beginning of August until mid-November to strengthen Army Groups North and Center with its reserves, while the groupings advancing on the southwestern axis did not receive sufficient reinforcements.

The activeness of the defensive was also apparent in the broad maneuvering of men and weapons. This was carried out in the aim of strengthening the troops on the most dangerous sectors (the committing to battle of reserve armies in July 1941 on the western sector and the concentration and shifting of major reserves to the Stalingrad sector in July-August 1942); creating groupings for launching counterstrikes (the counterstrikes of the Southwestern Front in the Brody area, the Western to the north of Orsha and the Northwestern at Soltsy) and groupings for carrying out partial offensive operations (the offensive operation of the Western Front on the Smolensk sector in August-September 1941); for withdrawing away from enemy attacks troops which were threatened

with encirclement or defeat, for organizing a new defensive front on the rear defensive lines.

The role of maneuvering was particularly great with the forced going over to the defensive, when defensive groupings had not been established beforehand. The war showed that for a maneuver to achieve its aim it had to be done covertly and particularly importantly, at a pace exceeding the enemy's rate of advance.

The strength of defenses to an enormous degree depended upon the availability and art of employing strategic reserves. The commitment of strategic reserves made it possible to eliminate the wide breaches formed as a result of the enemy's deep drive into the defenses, and to strengthen or establish new defensive groupings. The reserves comprised the basis of the groupings which launched numerous counterstrikes and conducted limited offensive operations. The following data show the scale of establishing and employing the reserves. The 70 reserve divisions existing at the beginning of the war had been depleted over the first 3 weeks. From 22 June through 1 December 1941, 291 divisions and 94 brigades were sent to the operational army from the Hq SHC Reserve. Of these, more than one-half was employed on the western sector. (6) Precisely the strategic reserves made it possible to halt the enemy in the 1941 summer-autumn campaign and create conditions for going over to a counteroffensive.

The presence and skillful employment of strategic reserves made it possible to restore and stabilize the front on the Stalingrad sector in 1942. Headquarters allocated from its reserves for this sector 11 tank and mechanized corps, 2 cavalry corps, 72 rifle divisions, 38 tank brigades, 100 artillery regiments and 10 air regiments. (7)

In conducting the strategic defensive on the enormous front particular importance was assumed by the organizing of clear cooperation between the strategic groupings fighting on various sectors, the armed services and fronts participating in the strategic operation as well as between the troops and partisan formations.

Headquarters directed the efforts of the fronts, the Air Forces, Air Defense Troops and fleets at carrying out the main tasks of the military campaigns: defeating the assault groupings of enemy troops, holding the military-political centers and important economic areas and establishing favorable conditions for going over to a counteroffensive.

The conducting of the strategic defensive during the first period of the Great Patriotic War involved a retreat of the Soviet troops to a significant depth.

With the enemy's deep envelopments and outflankings of the large groupings of the fronts, their pullback to rear lines sometimes was the only effective method of preserving the forces for subsequently organizing a rebuff of the enemy. The retreat was resorted to in those instances when the strategic front of the Soviet troops was breached and the Supreme High Command either lacked the necessary forces for checking the enemy or the committing of these to battle could not lead to positive results.

The pullback of the troops to new defensive lines in a majority of instances was carried out under heavy resistance from enemy artillery fire, air strikes and under the condition of the rapid advance of enemy tank groupings. During a retreat the troops of the fronts endeavored to cause the greatest losses to the enemy, to grind down its forces in the defensive battles and halt a further advance. However, with the absence in the enemy and troop rear of previously prepared defensive lines, in many instances the retreating troops were unable to organize a strong defense and check the enemy's advance for an extended time.

Combat experience showed that the troops could retreat in an organized manner and promptly take up new lines, maintaining battleworthiness only in the instance that the decision for their retreat was promptly taken. This was the case, for example, in the retreat of the armies on the right wing of the Southern Front and the left wing of the Southwestern Front from the Right-Bank Ukraine in July 1941 and the troops of these same fronts from areas to the east of Kharkov and from the Donbass beyond the Don in July 1942.(8)

At times due to the insufficient motorization of the formations, their poor maneuverability or the delayed decision for pulling back the troops, the enemy succeeded in cutting their escape routes and they were encircled. This led to great losses and told severely on the general course of the defensive. For example, one cannot consider it as justified the delay in pulling the troops of the Southwestern Front out of the Kiev area in September 1941, when the enemy enveloped their flanks and Headquarters was unable to provide substantial aid. The delayed decision in pulling back the troops of the front involved the loss of not only significant territory but also a large amount of men and weapons. Enormous effort was required to restore the defensive front on the southwestern sector.

Aviation was the most mobile means making it possible to influence the course of the defensive actions. During the first period of the war, there was a desire to attack the numerous advancing enemy groupings and rear facilities. This led to a situation where the aviation was employed dispersely and could not provide effective support to the defending troops. With the organizing of air armies, air operations were organized, as a rule, on the scale of a front and this ensured the launching of massed raids against enemy groupings on the crucial sectors.

On the defensive, the main efforts of aviation were directed at combined actions with the Ground Troops and Navy. At the same time, the fight for air supremacy continued to remain one of the important missions of the Air Forces. The successful carrying out of this task was aided by the increased capability for the massed employment of aviation on a strategic scale. A characteristic example of this was the independent air operation conducted by Headquarters at the end of May and the beginning of June 1942 using the combined forces of long-range aviation, the four air armies of the fronts and the aviation of the Black Sea Fleet in the aim of destroying enemy aviation at airfields.(9)

In the actions of the National Air Defense Troops in conducting the strategic defensive, the covering of important facilities was combined with the covering

of the retreating troops, the installations of the front rear, the lines of communications and repelling the advance of the ground enemy.

In carrying out the task of covering the maritime flanks of the fronts, the forces of the Navy provided defenses for major maritime cities (Odessa, Sevastopol, Novorossiysk, Tuapse, Kronshtadt), they participated in counterbattery bombardment (Leningrad), they transported troops and materiel by water (to Leningrad, Sevastopol and the Caucasus), and evacuated troops and the population (from Kerch, Sevastopol, from the Taman Peninsula and from Leningrad). The actions of the naval forces to disrupt the enemy lines of communications had the nature of daily fleet activities.

* * *

The last war provided rich experience in preparing and conducting the strategic defensive under the most diverse conditions. Very valuable was the experience of the deliberate defensive, particularly on the Kursk Salient which can be considered classic. One must endeavor to establish precisely such a defense. However, it is essential to bear in mind that there may not be such good conditions. For this reason closer attention should be paid to the experience of the defensive during the first period of the Great Patriotic War.

The war convincingly showed that the effectiveness of a strategic defense depended totally upon its careful preparation, the availability of strong strategic reserves and their prompt and effective employment. The defensive should be strong and active and capable of withstanding the effect of all types of weapons, successfully repelling attacks by superior enemy forces, maximally weakening the advancing enemy groupings by causing them damage and creating conditions for a subsequent going over to a decisive counteroffensive.

Very pertinent as before is the statement by M. V. Frunze that "troops in peacetime should be organized and indoctrinated in such a manner as to be able to carry out the tasks of both the defensive and offensive." (10)

The experience of the last war requires that the offensive and defensive be viewed in a dialectical unity, as interrelated types of strategic actions, and with the greater complexity of weapons and military actions themselves, the interdependence and reciprocity will be even further apparent. All of this must be taken into account in theory and practice, without permitting any gap between them.

FOOTNOTES

1. See "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 12, 1962, pp 280-281.
2. Ibid., Vol 5, 1975, p 321.

3. "Velikaya Otechestvennaya voyna 1941-1945. Entsiklopediya" [The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. An Encyclopedia], Moscow, Sov. Entsiklopediya, 1985, p 393.
4. "Istoriya voyennogo iskusstva" [History of Military Art], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1984, pp 164, 166.
5. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 12, 1980, p 11.
6. "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1976, p 56.
7. "Voyennoye iskusstvo vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne i v poslevoyennyy period" [Military Art in World War II and the Postwar Period], Moscow, Izd. VAGSh, 1985, p 171.
8. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", Vol 4, 1975, p 82; Vol 5, p 152.
9. Ibid., Vol 5, p 320.
10. M. V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, Voennoye izd-vo Narodnogo komissariata oborony Soyuza SSR, 1940, p 240.

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ACHIEVING COVERTNESS

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[Article by Col P. M. Simchenkov; the article was written from the experience of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet troops gained rich experience in ensuring secrecy in preparing for and carrying out the offensive. The ways and means for achieving this varied. The commanders and staffs of all levels employed them very successfully, particularly starting with the second period of the war. From this time the measures to ensure covertness became an inseparable part of their work. These were carried out comprehensively according to carefully elaborated plans, and were closely coordinated in terms of targets, place and time with the troop actions. Due to the fact that all preparations for the offensive were carried out in strictest secrecy it was largely possible to successfully conduct, for example, such operations as the Stalingrad, Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev, Lwow-Sandomierz and many others.

From my own experience on the front I know that it is a far from easy matter to completely ensure covert preparations for surprise actions.⁽¹⁾ This required energetic and effective activities by the commanders, the staffs and all the personnel in skillfully utilizing the camouflage properties of the terrain, nighttime and conditions of restricted visibility as well as the able employment of engineer and other means of camouflage, smokescreens and false actions. It was essential to have a good knowledge of the enemy, its troop grouping and the presence of strong and weak points in the defenses. It was also important to guess the enemy's plans and the actions conceived of by the enemy to repel our attacks. For this purpose we continuously conducted all types of reconnaissance and simultaneously waged an active struggle against enemy and air reconnaissance.

A crucial condition for achieving secrecy was primarily keeping in strictest secrecy the concept and plan of the operation and combat as well as the practical measures to prepare them.

An instructive example would be the work carried out by the commander and staff of the 13th Army in preparing for the offensive in the Voronezh-

Kastornoye Operation at the start of 1943.(2) The overall concept and plan of the army operation were worked out by a strictly limited range of generals and officers and kept strictly secret. All necessary documents were drawn up by hand in one copy. The immediate executors were given instructions concerning only their activities within the functional duties. As preparations of the leadership for the offensive, a military game was conducted in the course of which the divisional commanders became acquainted with the overall idea of the concept and the plan of the operation only to the degree that this was essential for carrying out the game. The operational documents worked out in the process of the game were kept in a secret part of the army staff in a printed form. They were not sent out to the troops but were used as the working documents for the army commander and chief of staff.

Correspondence on the questions of preparations for the operation was prohibited even in a coded form. Tasks were given to the division commanders by the army commander orally using a map specially prepared by the army staff. Instructions were also issued for cooperation. Copies of the combat order of the army and the planning table for cooperation were turned over to the divisional commanders by officers from the army staff 2 days prior to the start of the offensive.

The army commander and staff directed the preparations of the troops for the offensive by issuing partial orders to the executors personally or by officers from the operations section. The practical questions of organizing combat were settled in the field with the personal contact of the commanders and staff officers. Reconnaissance was conducted by small groups of commanders dressed as infantry privates or NCO personnel.

In order to ensure complete secrecy of the preparations for the offensive, all the rear bodies were excluded from operational correspondence on supply questions. Requests for ammunition, fuel and food were handled through the operations section of the army staff. The supply records were collected from the troops arriving as part of the army and were not turned over to the rear staff during the entire preparatory period.

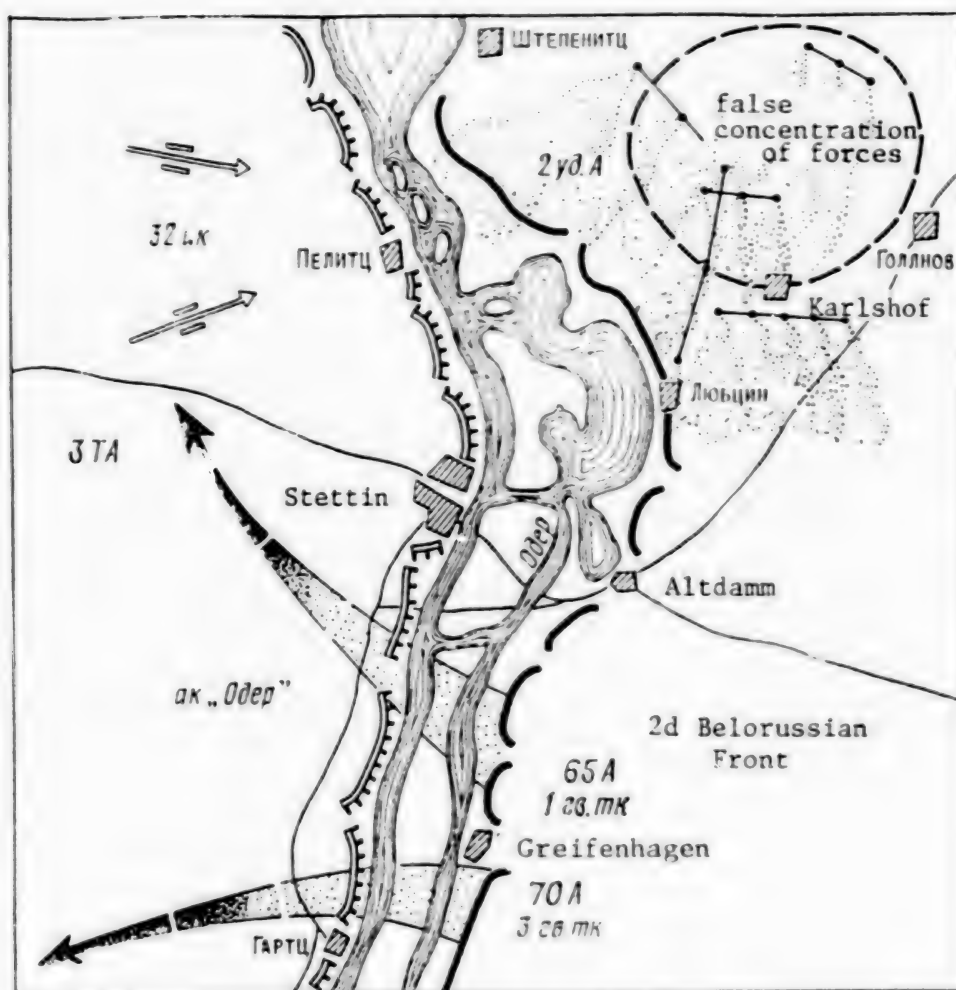
Particular attention was given to ensuring covert troop command. In the course of special assemblies conducted with staff officers from the divisions, a detailed study was made of the procedure tables, the call-signal tables, the coded maps and elaborated signals as well as the rules for employing them. On all staffs a firm procedure was instituted for conducting conversations over communications equipment. In order to exclude the tapping of conversations, all the wire telephone lines in the jump-off position of the first echelon divisions within a 3-km zone from the forward edge were double-wire and laid in the trenches and communications trenches. Radio communications operated only for receiving. In the artillery units radio contact was permitted with the start of the artillery softening up and in the remaining units with the start of the attack.

For achieving secrecy in troop actions, political indoctrination was conducted with the personnel aimed at increasing vigilance and preventing the giving out of information on troop positions, their organization, weapons and missions to be carried out. Strictest keeping of military secrecy was the law for all the

soldiers, sergeants, officers and generals and talks about the combat mission or the nature of the forthcoming actions were prohibited. We, the frontline veterans, were well aware that gossip and idle chatter were helpers for the enemy.

In concealing the plan of the operation, a major role was given to disinformation in the aim of confusing the enemy on the axis of the main thrust and the concentration areas of the assault groupings. The following examples show how widely and skillfully misleading the enemy was employed in the interests of concealing the ideas and plans of the command. From May through August 1942, German intelligence received false information on the concentration on various sectors of 255 rifle divisions, 3 tank armies, 6 tank corps, 6 cavalry divisions, 54 tank brigades, 2 army staffs and 30 artillery regiments.(3)

In the preparations for the Sandomierz-Silesian Operation, a false maneuver was successfully employed by the IV Guards Tank Corps in the area of the 60th Army on the Tarnow-Krakow axis.(4) This corps simulated the concentrating of tank army troops. For the verisimilitude of concentration of large masses of tanks here, for a period of 2-3 days the corps was moved to the Debica area and then secretly shifted to the Sandomierz bridgehead from whence it launched the main thrust. For carrying out the significant amount of work involved in simulating a false concentration area, a combat engineer brigade, two combat engineer battalions, a rifle and an artillery regiment and a tank battalion were employed. The subunits with their own forces made and set out mock-ups of 400 tanks, 500 motor vehicles and 1,000 guns.(5) Leadership over the false concentration was provided by "staffs of the tank army and tank corps" which were specially organized by the staff of the 60th Army and these were given field post office numbers. They had radios and set up false radio nets. The radios of the formations which had left to the other sector of the front were temporarily left at their previous positions and continued operating actively. In the false concentration area, quartermaster troops visited areas of the terrain, assigned spaces for the troops and warned the local population of the forthcoming evacuation to the rear in line with the pending arrival of a large number of troops here. The local population was involved in building roads and laying column tracks which were provided with road signs and indicators. Areas where dummy equipment was located were carefully secured. During the night bonfires were lit in various places and the field kitchens operated. For simulating the movement of tanks, loudspeakers were employed transmitting recordings of operating tank engines. "Lagging" tanks which simulated breakdowns and overhauls were set out on the approach routes to the false concentration area. The roads leading to the "concentration area" were blocked by traffic control barriers manned by troops in tank uniforms. Scores of real tanks at night moved along the roads and over fields, leaving track prints while motor transport with headlights on moved through the false areas. Several days before the start of the operation, in the zone of the 60th Army, the work pace was intensified by reconnaissance groups, the nighttime reconnaissance sweeps were more frequent, the moving up of artillery to position areas and registration fire were simulated. All these measures distracted the enemy's attention from the main sector and this significantly ensured the successful carrying out of the Sandomierz-Silesian Operation.



Employment of Smokescreens for Operational Camouflage
on the Second Belorussian Front (16-19 April 1945)

One should also note the instructive example of concealing the axis of the main thrust by skillfully organized false actions of the troop employing smokescreens in the preparations for the Berlin Operation. Thus, in the zone of the Second Belorussian Front, on the sector of the 2d Assault Army to the north of Stettin, from 15 through 22 April 1945, they simulated the concentration of up to two combined-arms armies, three tank corps, one tank brigade and a large amount of crossing equipment (see the diagram). The enemy was deceived by the setting up of false installations, false radio information, and the setting of smokescreens all correlated to the concentration of the troop groupings. For this 350 dummy tanks and 500 dummy guns were made and set up in the false concentration areas and 880 linear meters of vertical camouflage fence were built.(6)

In the sectors designated for the false crossing of the Oder, intense reconnaissance was carried out and boats and other crossing equipment assembled and these were concentrated in the false crossing areas. At the same time, data were transmitted over the radio network on the arrival of the 5th Assault Army and 2d Guards Tank Army, in this area. For a period of 3 days, two or three times in the false concentration area smoke was generated along a front of 15-25 km. Later after a 3-day break, the smoke-generating lines were moved from the interior to the bank of the Oder. The antiaircraft artillery specially assigned to cover this area, in spotting even individual enemy aircraft, opened intense fire. In order to further mislead the enemy on the sector of the main thrust by the front, our troops began to prepare defensive lines to the south of Stettin. To demonstrate the pullback of the tank troops from this sector to the east, 12 trainloads of dummy tanks under heavy guard were moved by rail.

The measures carried out attracted the enemy's attention to the area of the false troop concentration and misled it. On this sector enemy firing activity increased, reconnaissance actions became particularly active, the number of tanks and artillery rose and there was a partial shifting of units. All of this greatly ensured the surprise of our troop attack to the south of Stettin and as a whole the successful actions of the Second Belorussian Front in the Berlin Operation.

In the war years the commanders and staffs of all levels paid particular attention to keeping troop movements in strictest secrecy in the aims of regrouping, reaching jump-off areas and deployment areas, for carrying out maneuvers as well as with operational and supply shipments. In order to ensure the secrecy of these actions, firm troop command was required as well as a well organized system of a commandant service and constant, strict supervision over the observance of camouflage measures by the personnel of all the units and formations.

For example, due to the carefully organized and conducted camouflage measures in the First Baltic Front in June 1944, there was a covert regrouping of troops of the 6th Guards Army from the right wing of the front, where it occupied the defensive, to the center, to the sector of the main thrust.(7) As a result the enemy was unable to detect the preparations for the attack by our troops to the north of Vitebsk in the Belorussian Operation. Such high effectiveness of the camouflage measures was achieved due to the fact that all

troop movements were carried out solely at night, from 2200 to 0400 hours. The columns completed their marches before dawn. The movement of lagging subunits during the daytime was categorically prohibited. In whatever position dawn caught the moving troops, they were obliged to halt their movement and vacate the roads. The troops and equipment were carefully camouflaged at major halts and in the rest areas. The lighting of bonfires was prohibited and contact of the personnel with the indigenous population was limited. The movement of motor vehicles at night was permitted only with headlights off. For guiding the drivers, the front of the hoods and the backs of the vehicles were painted white and on the roads indicators that were clearly visible in the darkness were set out. Travel during the day was permitted only for vehicles having special passes.

The troops were moved along designated, previously reconnoitered and prepared routes. On sectors where the routes could be seen by the enemy, vertical camouflage nets were set up. Special indicators and traffic control posts were set out on the boundaries of the visible sectors. Along the roads which the troops were to use for the march, wire communications was organized as well as communications by message carrying. The operating of radios during the march or in the rest and concentration areas was categorically prohibited.

In the aim of ensuring concealment of the move and deployment of the troops, a commandant service was organized on the roads, in the positions of the units and formations, at the artillery firing positions, at command posts, in areas where engineer work was being carried out as well as at the army and front rear bases. The commandant service on the roads in the troop area to a depth of 10-12 km from the forward edge was organized by the corps commanders and in the army and front zones, respectively, by the chiefs of staff of the armies and the front. Each of these zones was split into commandant areas which included two-four roads. In turn, the commandant areas were divided into commandant sectors. Under the commandant of each area there was a commandant post figuring one officer post with two officers for every 3-5 km of road and a two-man post consisting of NCOs and privates every 1-2 km of road.(8) The demands of the commandant post in terms of the observance of the traffic order and camouflaging were obligatory for everyone and were subject to immediate and unquestioned fulfillment.

For supervising the observance of march and camouflage discipline by the troops, air observation was also provided. If the movement of columns was detected during the daylight hours or the violating of camouflage in the troop positions in the field, the aircraft dropped a pennant with the demand to immediately cease the violation and adopt the required camouflage measures.

During the war years, a successful solution was provided to such an important problem as achieving the covert deployment of assault groupings in the forming-up areas for the offensive. In order to secretly locate a large amount of men, equipment and ammunition in a limited area, significant engineer work had to be done to prepare and camouflage the positions, to widely employ natural shelters such as forests, brush, ravines and population points and strictly observe blackout and sound masking measures. On the front, I recall, we often resorted to rather simple but effective camouflage measures: we never positioned the subunits close to a starkly apparent

landmark. In the summer the tanks, guns, mortars and machine guns were kept in the shadow of trees, structures or in such a manner that their surface was less illuminated by the sun, and at night by moonlight; during the winter the equipment was painted white and the personnel often employed white camouflage cloaks.

The Sandomierz bridgehead can serve as an example of the skillful organizing of the covert positioning of troops in preparing for an offensive. Here for our troops particularly difficult conditions arose, as the terrain was open and could be viewed by the enemy to a depth of up to 8 km. (9) For this reason all the work related to engineer organization of the forming-up areas and positions were carried out only at night. On the sectors where the main thrusts were to be launched, vertical camouflage nets 1.5-2 m high were put up. Being at a depth of 1-1.5 km from the first line of our defense's trenches, these nets made it possible to move the units and subunits and have the artillery take up the firing positions without the enemy knowing this.

In the aim of the more effective and organized employment of the camouflage capabilities of the terrain, all the territory was divided into areas each of which included a forested area or a group of small copses. The boundaries of these areas were indicated to the formations and units 4-5 days prior to the start of the offensive. For concealing troop movements, across glades column tracks were laid and these led to the front and lateral routes. The edges of forests and roadways adjacent to them were covered by vertical screens of branches which also concealed well the movement of the subunits and combat equipment. I remember well even now in what secrecy and with what care we relieved the first echelon units with the troops assigned for the offensive. For this the staffs worked out a relief plan. First of all artillery was moved up to the previously prepared firing positions. It usually moved at night in separate subunits over a period of 4-5 days and ended 2-3 days before the start of the offensive. The guns assigned for direct laying took up their prepared positions a day prior to the start of the offensive or during the night before the attack. During this time special attention was paid to maintaining the previous artillery firing conditions. The rifle units took up the forming-up places, relieving the subunits operating here previously, usually a day before the offensive or during the night prior to the offensive. The mission was issued to the sergeants and soldiers 2-3 hours before the start of the attack.

The close support tanks in the aims of achieving secrecy usually took up the forming-up places during the night prior to the offensive or during the period of the artillery softening up. In order to conceal the noise of the tanks and other equipment from the enemy, loudspeakers were widely employed and these for an extended time broadcast music or created various noises; it was also a practice of having the small arms and mortars fire from the first and second positions.

It was explained to the personnel that the moving up of the artillery to the forward edge and the condensing of the first echelon battle formations were being carried out in the interests of strengthening the defenses as according to obtained intelligence data the enemy was preparing for active hostilities on this sector of the front. On the forward edge the personnel was not

permitted to appear in a uniform which differed from the clothing of the subunits which had been here previously.

A great deal was done to conceal the very start of the attack. During the first period of the war the enemy could often determine when our troops were going over to the attack, as according to the then adopted scheme the attack would start, as a rule, after the artillery softening up which in turn often ended by a time which was a multiple of 5 or 10 minutes (for example, 55 minutes and 70 minutes) and ended with a heavy firing volley or rocket artillery. In this context the enemy knew well that once there was the massed firing of the rocket launchers, it meant that they could come out of the shelters and dugouts and meet the attacking subunits with fire. Subsequently, they began to go over to the attack during the period of the artillery softening up and each time at a new time (for example, on the 27th, 38th or 44th minute) so that the enemy was unable to adapt to the firing conditions and the attack. Here the attack, as a rule, commenced at the heaviest period of the artillery softening up, when the personnel of the enemy first echelon units were still in the shelters and trenches and were unable to observe the beginning movement of our infantry and tanks and did not put up fire resistance. This made it possible for our attacking subunits to rush in behind the bursting shells and suddenly appear over the enemy trenches. Of course, it was not easy to skillfully conceal the start of the attack and closely coordinate the rush against the enemy with the artillery fire. This was achieved in the process of serious troop training and with the acquiring of great combat experience.

The war showed that the best time for the starting of the artillery softening up was the predawn hours. Precisely then the night shift had been only partially relieved by the daytime one and the night firing system had not been completely converted to daytime conditions. For this reason surprise powerful artillery fire immediately demoralized both enemy shifts and caused the greatest losses in personnel.

In the interests of achieving covertness and surprise of going over to the offensive, the troops on a number of sectors of a front employed false infantry attacks with tanks. In this instance everything was done so that the enemy was unable to realize that the attack was false. The force of the attack, the rapidity of the rush and the might of the artillery fire should not arouse enemy suspicions. For example, successful was the attack conducted by specially assigned platoons 30 minutes prior to the end of the artillery softening up along the entire front of the 5th Guards Army from the First Ukrainian Front in the Vistula-Oder Operation. The Nazis mistook the false actions as an attack by the main forces, they moved up their troops to repel it and as a result suffered heavy casualties from the artillery fire.(10)

In certain operations, in the course of the already commenced offensive, our troops successfully employed various procedures for misleading the enemy on the true purpose of the current actions. As a result, the enemy was often late in its attempts to parry our attacks. For example, during the Vistula-Oder Operation on 23 January 1945, upon instructions of the command of the First Belorussian Front, the commanders of the IX and XII Guards Tank Corps transmitted to the commander of the 2d Guards Tank Army using a simplified

code the false radio messages: "Mission for Danzig received, enough fuel." (11) These radio messages sent several times over the airwaves were aimed at concealing from the enemy the axis of the further operations by the tank formations on the front's right wing. The deception was successful. The German Command sent its reserves to the Danzig sector, leaving the Charnikau (Czarnkow) area virtually without a cover.

For achieving maximum secrecy on the offensive, in the course of the war great attention was given to actively combating enemy reconnaissance. This was caused by the fact that German intelligence concentrated its main efforts in the combat zone and rear of our fronts and armies. For example, in January 1945, in the East Prussian sector alone, the Nazis dropped 150 spies and saboteurs in the rear areas of the advancing troops and 250 in march, requiring a major effort to combat them. For eliminating the enemy agents in the front area and in the rear zones, the staffs prepared and conducted special operations. As a result in the First Belorussian, the First and Third Ukrainian Fronts in 1944, for example, thousands of saboteurs were discovered and eliminated and hundreds of major spy groups were crushed. (12)

In conclusion it must be said that the experience gained during the years of the Great Patriotic War in achieving secrecy on the offensive is of great value at present. Under present-day conditions, when the enemy will possess effective means of reconnaissance and high-precision weapons, the importance of covert actions as a most important element in ensuring surprise and maintaining the viability of the troops has increased greatly while the measures carried out on this level have become sharply more complex. However, much of what was gained by our commanders and staffs in achieving secrecy on the offensive can be employed in the operational and combat training practices of the troops considering the new weapons.

FOOTNOTES

1. During the years of the Great Patriotic War, P. M. Simchenkov was the chief of the troop reconnaissance section of the staff of the 60th Army.
2. "Nastupleniye 13-y armii v Voronezhsko-Kastornenskoy operatsii. Operativno-takticheskiy otchet" [Offensive of the 13th Army in the Voronezh-Kastornoye Operation. Operational-Tactical Report], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1944, pp 23, 73-77.
3. "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945 gg." [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1965, p 139.
4. "Armeyskiye operatsii (Primery iz opyta Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny)" [Army Operations (Examples From the Experience of the Great Patriotic War)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 148.

5. "Sandomirsko-Silezskaya operatsiya. Nastupleniye 1-go Ukrainskogo fronta v yanvare 1945 g." [The Sandomierz-Silesian Operation. The Offensive of the First Ukrainian Front in January 1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1948, p 51.
6. "Berlinskaya operatsiya 1945 goda," [The 1945 Berlin Operation], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1950, p 85.
7. VOENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 11, 1964, p 13.
8. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials on Studying the Experience of the War], No 15, November-December 1944, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1945, p 63.
9. "Sandomirsko-Silezskaya operatsiya...", p 51.
10. "Sovetskaya Voenaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 2, 1976, p 162.
11. Ibid., Vol 3, 1977, p 130.
12. "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [The Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 519.

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COMBATING ENEMY ARTILLERY IN COURSE OF STALINGRAD COUNTEROFFENSIVE

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col Gen M. D. Sidorov]

[Text] One of the important missions which confronted the artillery during the period of the Stalingrad counteroffensive of the Soviet troops was the combating of enemy artillery and mortar batteries.

Success in carrying out this complex problem depended largely upon how accurately and promptly the enemy artillery grouping was detected. For this reason for fixing the enemy batteries during the preparatory period of the operation, in addition to operational artillery reconnaissance and observation, the forces of artillery and air reconnaissance were also called upon but these, unfortunately, were not sufficient in number in the fronts. Thus, the Southwestern, Stalingrad and Don Fronts had only eight separate artillery reconnaissance battalions (oradn) and three separate spotter-reconnaissance air squadrons (okrae). The resources of artillery reconnaissance and observation sufficed merely to assign one oradn to the armies operating on the main sector. But it was not possible to fully utilize the available reconnaissance battalions since certain armies obtained them several days prior to the offensive. For example, the 812th and 816th Separate Artillery Reconnaissance Battalions assigned, respectively, to the 5th Tank Army and 21st Army of the Southwestern Front, arrived in their areas and began working only 3 days prior to the start of the counteroffensive. The battalions which arrived in the field forces 15-20 days prior to the start of the operation fought under better conditions and much more effectively. Thus, the 810th Separate Artillery Reconnaissance Battalion which was attached to the 24th Army of the Don Front, was able to promptly and fully detect the entire enemy artillery grouping and partially the enemy mortars and carried out work to condense the control network and fix the battle formations for the subunits of the artillery regiments from the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command]. The 812th oradn which was well prepared but arrived in the 5th Tank Army just 3 days prior to the offensive was able to reconnoiter only 14 artillery batteries and carry out the main topographic work. The 816th oradn of the 21st Army due to insufficient preparation and poor cooperation among its subunits, in such a brief time was completely unable to provide substantial aid to the artillery staff of the field force in reconnoitering the enemy artillery and mortar batteries.

The organization of air reconnaissance caused great difficulties. The 45th Separate Spotter-Reconnaissance Air Squadron which was attached to the 21st Army of the Southwestern Front was unable to effectively carry out reconnaissance, as it did not have communications equipment, a permanent base area and an air cover. Due to the bad weather conditions, there were few sorties (just seven) for photographing the enemy defenses and primarily the artillery firing positions, and these were made by the 31st and 32d okrae of the Stalingrad Front.

All the same, regardless of the designated shortcomings, in the zones of the 5th Tank Army and 21st Army of the Southwestern Front and the 65th Army of the Don Front alone by 19 November 1942, some 135 enemy artillery and 79 mortar batteries, 79 antitank guns and 49 observation posts had been detected. (1) And the use of various types of artillery reconnaissance and observation made it possible to determine the location of up to 70-80 percent of the batteries with rather high accuracy. The average deviation relative to the true coordinates of the targets was 20-30 m for the X axis and from 15 to 30 m for the Y axis.

The reconnaissance data served as the basis for organizing counterbattery bombardment which was assigned an important place in the plans for the artillery offensive. In each army this was planned individually and was basically carried out by the forces of the army long-range groups. Thus, of the 45 artillery and mortar batteries spotted in the zone of the 5th Tank Army of the Southwestern Front, the plan for the artillery offensive envisaged the neutralizing of just 15 of the most active ones. The army artillery long-range group which consisted of 4 cannon artillery regiments was to neutralize 4 batteries with two intense shellings: in the course of the artillery softening up and with the start of the attack. The neutralizing of the remaining 11 batteries was entrusted to the artillery of the rifle divisions and was carried out according to their plans.

In the plan of the artillery offensive for the 21st Army, the tasks for combating the enemy artillery were given only to the army artillery group. In the course of the artillery softening up it was to neutralize 24 of the most active batteries. It was planned that three intense shellings would be made against 2 of them, two shellings against 7 batteries and one against 13 batteries. For the 2 remaining batteries only fire observation was planned. This was to be carried out for all the neutralized batteries, as a rule, in the intervals between the intense shelling. The combating of the remaining enemy batteries of the 73 ones reconnoitered in the army zone was to be carried out by the artillery weapons of the rifle divisions considering the tasks carried out by the army DD [long-range] artillery group. Unfortunately, no provision had been made for neutralizing and destroying the enemy batteries for the period of supporting the attack. This, undoubtedly, was a major drawback in organizing both counterbattery bombardment as well as in the planning of the artillery offensive in this field force as a whole.

In a majority of the other armies, tasks for countering enemy artillery in the course of supporting the infantry and tank attack were set in a non-specific and general manner. For example, in the plan for the artillery offensive of the 65th Army of the Don Front, the army DD artillery group was given the

mission of carrying out intense shelling against batteries which had not been neutralized in the course of the artillery softening up. The plan for the artillery offensive of the 57th Army of the Stalingrad Front stated that the army DD artillery group was to neutralize enemy batteries with the going over of the troops to the attack. In the 51st Army of the same front, the army DD artillery group was ordered by the plan for the artillery offensive during the period of supporting the infantry and tank attack to conduct fire observation (battery fire) for the enemy artillery and mortar batteries.

The lack of the necessary experience as well as a uniform approach in planning counterbattery bombardment was the reason for such shortcomings as a lack of concreteness in planning the combating of enemy artillery and mortars in the period of supporting the infantry and tank attack and its complete absence for the period of escorting the advancing troops deep in the enemy defenses.

In speaking generally about the results of counterbattery bombardment in the course of the November offensive by the troops of the Southwestern, Don and Stalingrad Fronts, it is essential to emphasize that due to the involvement of a significant amount of artillery for conducting massed fire in the course of the artillery softening up and the support for the attack, the mission of neutralizing and destroying the enemy batteries and separate guns and mortars was successfully carried out. The artillery fire of just eight armies involved in forming the inner perimeter of encirclement around the major Nazi troop grouping at Stalingrad destroyed 94 artillery and mortar batteries, destroyed 305 and neutralized 350 separate guns and mortars and 201 observation posts. The artillery troops also carried out 700 firings to neutralize artillery and mortar batteries.(2)

In firing against the enemy batteries, separate guns and mortars, the firing settings were determined by the extensive use of ranging guns and shifting fire from registration marks. Here the most effective was registration directly at the targets from the measured deviations (using the sound ranging batteries and conduct of fire by combined observation) and this reduced the time for carrying out the fire task and the ammunition consumption rate by 2-3-fold and increased firing effectiveness by 1.5-2.5-fold.

The experience gained to a definite degree was employed in preparing and carrying out the Middle Don Operation and particularly in defeating the surrounded Nazi troop grouping (Operation Ring).

In preparing for the offensive on the Middle Don, the armies of the Southwestern Front (with the exception of the 1st Guards), as had been the case in the November offensive, organized DD artillery groups of at least two artillery cannon regiments each for combating the enemy artillery.

In the 1st Guards Army, due to the delay in concentrating the cannon regiments assigned to it from the 9th Artillery Division, an army DD artillery group was not established. For this reason the task of combating the enemy artillery batteries was entrusted to the infantry support groups of the rifle divisions. This circumstance, as practice was to show, led to a situation where the field force was unable to carry out successful counterbattery bombardment.(3)

A particular feature of organizing the fight against enemy artillery in the 6th Army of the Voronezh Front was the fact that a DD artillery group was established in the XV Rifle Corps which was to make the main attack. The corps DD group consisted of the 38th, 129th and 206th Cannon Artillery Regiments and the 619th oradn.

The neutralizing of the artillery and mortar batteries was planned chiefly in the course of the artillery softening up. In the plan worked out by the artillery staff of the Southwestern Front for the artillery offensive it was stated that in the course of the artillery softening up the first and second intense shellings by all the artillery was to be made against the artillery and mortar batteries, the command posts and communications centers as well as against other installations and targets on the enemy forward edge and deep in the defenses and within the range of the artillery weapons. During the neutralization and destruction period, the intense shelling and fire observation against the detected batteries should be carried out by the army artillery groups.

By the start of the infantry and tank attack, the enemy artillery had been securely neutralized and could not put up substantial resistance to our troops. Only in the area of the 1st Guards Army in the breakthrough sector did the enemy endeavor to check the advance by firing individual long-range guns and partially the divisional artillery. (4)

During the period of preparing the operation to destroy the surrounded enemy grouping at Stalingrad, the experience of the previous operations was carefully considered. In particular, great attention was given to the specific planning of the fight against enemy artillery and to massing the reconnaissance forces and weapons. While in going over to the counteroffensive the Don Front had three oradn and not a single okrae, during this operation it had eight oradn and three okrae. Of these, three oradn conducted reconnaissance in the zone of the 65th Army which was to launch the main thrust. One oradn was assigned to each of the remaining armies. Such an amount of artillery reconnaissance and observation forces on the sector of the main thrust made it possible to narrow the reconnaissance zone per reconnaissance battalion to 4-5 km.

The effective work of the artillery reconnaissance and observation bodies made it possible to disclose the enemy artillery grouping rather completely. As a total from December 1942 until the start of the offensive, some 739 batteries were fixed in the zone of the front. (5) Here sound ranging was the main means for reconnoitering enemy artillery. It played a crucial role in getting a fix on the enemy artillery batteries. Just in the sector of the main thrust on a front of 12 km, sound ranging got a fix on 33 batteries.

The air reconnaissance forces, as before, were little used. Because of bad weather and the small number of flying days, the three okrae which arrived on the front virtually did not conduct reconnaissance of the enemy batteries and in the course of the operation merely corrected artillery fire.

By the beginning of the offensive, the armies of the Don Front had 6,860 guns and mortars. This made it possible to ensure a supremacy of 1.7-fold over the

enemy artillery.(6) All the artillery regiments which were armed with 122-mm cannons and 152-mm howitzer cannons, as a rule, were included as part of the DD artillery groups for combating the enemy artillery and reserves. In the armies which included not more than 2 or 3 such regiments, one DD group was organized. Where there were more than 3, in the DD artillery group two or three subgroups were established according to sectors. Thus, in the DD group of the 64th Army which consisted of 7 regiments, two subgroups were organized. In the DD group of the 65th Army which had 11 regiments, three subgroups were organized. These were headed by the commanders of the artillery divisions attached to the field force. The commander of the 4th Artillery Division, Col N. V. Ignatov, was appointed commander of the righthand subgroup, the commander of the 1st Artillery Division, Col V. N. Mazur, was assigned to the central subgroup, and the commander of the 11th Artillery Division, Engr-Col A. D. Popovich, to the lefthand.

Army artillery groups were not established in the 21st and 62d Armies. The cannon artillery was attached to the rifle divisions advancing on the main sectors.

The comprehensive employment of the weapons and reconnaissance forces was a most important feature in organizing the artillery grouping. Without fail the DD artillery groups included reconnaissance artillery battalions which carried out reconnaissance and corrected fire.

In preparing for the operation, the artillery commander of the Don Front, Gen V. I. Kazakov, and his staff worked out an artillery preparation schedule on the basis of which the army artillery staffs more specifically and carefully planned the artillery offensive. For the first time during the war, the countering of enemy artillery was planned. During the period of artillery softening up, this was carried out by four intense shellings alternating with bursts of gun and battery fire. Particularly heavy intense shelling against the artillery batteries was planned at the beginning and end of the artillery softening up with a firing density on the sector of the main thrust (the 65th Army) from 120 to 140 percent of the ammunition consumption rate set by the Rules of Fire using from two to three batteries per enemy battery.

In benefiting from the surprise of the first intense shelling, it was assumed that the greatest damage would be done to the enemy artillery. In the course of the subsequent intense shelling against the batteries, there was to be an unnoticeable shift from artillery softening up to artillery support for the attack. For this purpose the two or three batteries assigned from each artillery regiment for a period of 2 minutes after the end of the artillery softening up were to fire at the enemy batteries, covering the gap between the artillery softening up and the beginning of the artillery support for the attack.(7)

A new step forward was taken also in organizing the artillery support of the attack. In the zone of the 65th Army, the attack was supported by a rolling barrage. In the zones of advance of the other armies by the method of the successive concentration of fire. The carefully planned support for the attack made it possible to utilize the DD groups solely for combating the enemy artillery and reserves.

The greatest effectiveness of fire damage to the enemy artillery and mortar batteries was achieved in firing using measured deflections and with fire correction.

The heavy fire strike against the enemy artillery and mortar grouping during the period of the artillery softening up on 10 January 1943 provided the complete neutralizing of the entire enemy fire plan. On the first day of the operation in the breakthrough zone of the 65th Army alone, 10 artillery batteries and 3 mortar batteries, 57 separate guns and 22 mortars were destroyed, 26 artillery batteries and 30 separate guns were neutralized. Over the period from 10 through 25 January, the front's artillery destroyed 315 guns and 160 mortars.(8)

The effectiveness of combating enemy artillery in the zone of the Don Front from 10 January through 2 February 1943 can be judged from the data given in the table.

Results of Countering Enemy Artillery in Operation
to Destroy Surrounded Grouping*

No.	Objects Hit	Destroyed	Neutralized	Total
1	Artillery batteries	74	234	308
2	Mortar batteries	53	204	257
3	Separate guns	377	286	663
4	Separate mortars	239	204	443
5	Six-barrel mortars	38	63	101
Total		781	991	1,772

* "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials for Studying the Experience of the War], No 7, p 35.

In the course of Operation Ring, aviation also combated the enemy artillery. Pilots from the 16th Air Army of the Don Front during the period of the fighting to destroy the surrounded enemy neutralized 25 artillery and mortar batteries.(9)

In this operation the degree of fire damage to the Nazi artillery was significantly higher than in the course of the November offensive. While only 21 percent of the enemy artillery-mortar grouping was destroyed in the operation to surround the enemy troops at Stalingrad, in Operation Ring respectively 44 and 56 percent were destroyed and neutralized.

The effectiveness of the counterbattery bombardment can be judged also from the replies of captured Nazis. "The counterbattery bombardment of the Soviet Army at Stalingrad was organized very well," stated the captured artillery chief of the LI Army Corps, Maj Gen Wassol.(10)

Skillful, effectively organized and efficiently implemented combating of enemy artillery in the counteroffensive at Stalingrad ensured the winning and holding of fire supremacy over enemy artillery and this to a significant degree contributed to the successful conduct of the operation as a whole.

Thus, the experience gained by the Soviet troops in the offensive at Stalingrad showed that the integrated employment of artillery, air and other types of reconnaissance made it possible to promptly and precisely determine the coordinates of the enemy artillery batteries, while the presence of a powerful artillery grouping, the careful planning of its combat employment and flexible and dependable command of it in the operation ensured the sufficiently effective neutralization and destruction of the enemy artillery.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Artilleriya v nastupatelnykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Artillery in the Offensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, Book II, 1965, pp 53-54.
2. Ibid., p 73.
3. "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [Soviet Artillery in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p 172.
4. "Artilleriya v nastupatelnykh...", Book II, p 79; "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy...", p 172.
5. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials for Studying the Experience of the War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 7, 1943, pp 23-24.
6. "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, Vol 6, 1976, p 76.,
7. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu...", No 7, p 25.
8. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 206, inv. 262, file 180, sheets 110-111.
9. Ibid., inv. 176502, file 5, sheets 93-94.
10. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu...", No 7, p 27.

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LOGISTIC SUPPORT OF FRONTS IN ENCIRCLEMENT OPERATIONS

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 6, Jun 1986 (signed to press 23 May 86) pp 31-38

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Col Gen K. N. Abramov]

[Text] In the course of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet troops conducted a series of major encirclement operations, including such outstanding ones as the Stalingrad, Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy, Belorussian, Iasi-Kishinev, Berlin, Prague and Manchurian. These were characterized by a decisiveness of goals, by the rapid development and high intensity of hostilities.

In planning and preparing the encirclement operations, particularly powerful assault groupings were organized and these ensured the rapid breaching of the enemy defenses, the establishing of the internal and external perimeters of encirclement and the destruction of the surrounded enemy troops in a limited time.

In the encirclement operations, as in all others, one of the most important principles for rear support of the troops was observed, that is, to supply first and most completely the fronts and armies fighting on the main axes. For example, in preparing for the counteroffensive of Soviet troops at Stalingrad, upon the decision of Hq SHC, the main flow of transport supply went first to the Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts. Regardless of the extremely limited capabilities of rail and river transport, by 19 November these fronts had stockpiled large supplies of ammunition, fuel, food and fodder.

On the fronts the materiel was distributed between the armies also in full accord with their missions in the operations. Thus, by the start of the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, increased supplies of ammunition and fuel had been established on the Southwestern Front in the 5th Tank Army and the 21st Combined-Arms Army which were fighting on the main sector; in the Stalingrad Front in the 57th and 51st Armies. During the Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy Operation, the first and most fully supplied were the 6th Tank Army and the 27th Army of the First Ukrainian Front, the 53d Army, the 4th Guards Army and the 5th Guards Tank Army of the Second Ukrainian Front which made up the assault groupings. In the Iasi-Kishinev Operation, these were the 52d Army, the 53d Army, the 6th Tank Army of the Second Ukrainian Front and the 53d

Army, the 37th Army and the 46th Army of the Third Ukrainian Front which were to launch the main thrust.

Strict observance of the principle of the effective employment of ammunition, fuel and other materiel made it possible in a short period of time and with limited material resources on the fronts to establish larger supplies in the troops of the assault groupings.

As in the other offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War, in the encirclement operations great attention was paid to the proper echeloning of supplies and bringing them closer to the breakthrough sectors. By the start of an offensive, increased supplies of ammunition and fuel had been established in the units and formations of the first and second echelons of the assault groupings, the ammunition required for the artillery softening up and support of the attack had been laid out at the firing positions, the front dumps and their sections had been set up at nearby railroad stations (railheads) while the army field depots and their sections were brought closer to the forward edge and deployed, as a rule, on the ground in the troop rear areas. Due to these measures up to 75-80 percent of the material resources existing in the fronts was concentrated on the breakthrough sectors directly in the troops, at army and front dumps (their sections) some 20-40 km from the forward edge.

However, in organizing logistic support, along with the general principles, the encirclement operations also involved many specific features caused by the need to support two troop groupings which were carrying out major independent tasks at a significant distance apart. The first group was made up of the troops which were encircling and destroying the enemy and the second involved troops which established the external perimeter of encirclement and repelled counterstrikes by the enemy which was endeavoring to relieve the surrounded troops. This also predetermined the specific features of their rear support. Among such features were: the differentiated organization of ammunition and fuel supplies in the troop groupings considering their role and tasks in the operation; the establishing of the maximum possible mobile supplies in the organic means of transport, in the combat and line vehicles and including in the organic rear mobile columns transport from the superior level with ammunition and fuel supplies; the transporting of materiel by all types of transport and by line vehicles during the preparation and in the course of the operation; the through transporting of materiel to troops fighting on the external perimeter of encirclement; the extensive use of operational rear groups for organizing prompt and uninterrupted delivery; the organizing of the transporting of materiel over routes assigned to the motor vehicle units (subunits); the extensive use in a number of operations of air transport as well as local means of transport; the prompt moving up of the head army depot sections behind the advancing troops as well as certain front and army dumps (their sections); the extensive maneuvering of supplies; close cooperation among the rear bodies of adjacent field forces; prompt maneuvering of the delivery routes and the extensive employment of local resources and captured supplies.

The ammunition and fuel supplies in the formations and field forces of the assault groupings were established on a differentiated basis, considering the

role and combat tasks in breaking through the enemy defenses and surrounding it. Here in the combined-arms armies which broke through the enemy defenses and, as a rule, established the interior perimeter of encirclement, ammunition supplies for the artillery and mortar units were increased by 50-70 percent. In the mechanized and tank corps and armies which initiated a rapid offensive in depth in the aim of forming the external perimeter of encirclement, higher fuel and ammunition supplies were established for the tanks. For example, in the operations of 1944-1945, by the moment of committing the tank armies to the breach, they had 3.0-3.5 units of fire of tank ammunition and 4.5-5.0 loads of diesel fuel and gasoline.(1)

All organic motor transport was put fully to use for deploying the increased supplies in the troops of the shock groupings. A portion of the ammunition and fuel was additionally located on combat and operational support vehicles. The mobile rear columns of the tank (mechanized) corps and armies included subunits of the army and front motor transport loaded with fuel and the main types of ammunition. In order to establish increased supplies in the troops in a limited time, the material in preparing for the operations was carried by all types of transport available on the fronts. By rail freight was transported to the front dumps, the army supply stations and railheads of the mechanized and tank corps and separate formations and these were set up on the head railroad sections close to the concentration areas of the formations and their start lines.

In preparing for the operation, the materiel was transported from the railroad stations by the front, army and organic motor transport and partially cart transport. In a number of instances for accelerating the delivery of ammunition and fuel, operational support vehicles were employed. Organic transport was widely employed on all the fronts for delivering materiel from the railheads, the army field depots and the sections of the front dumps. The integrated use of different types of transport ensured the faster stockpiling of the essential supplies. In order to conceal from the enemy the stockpiling of materiel in the troops, all measures related to the delivery of ammunition, fuel and food were carried out, as a rule, at nighttime.

The necessity of such an organization of transport was dictated primarily by the significant consumption of materiel by the troops of the assault groupings in the course of the encirclement operations. In a majority of the operations, troop actions lasted at least 10-15 days. These were fiercest in breaching the enemy defenses, in repelling its relieving counterstrikes and in destroying the defending encircled groupings, particularly in fortified areas and major cities (Stalingrad, Budapest and East Prussian Operations).

The consumption of materiel by the armies of the assault groupings varied depending upon the intensity of the fighting within significant limits: from 0.1-0.15 to 0.5-0.8 units of fire for ammunition, from 0.1 to 0.3 fuelings a day for gasoline and from 0.2 to 0.5-0.6 for diesel fuel. As can be seen from the table, the combined-arms armies fighting on the inner perimeter of encirclement as an average per operation consumed from 2.5 to 3.5 units of fire of ammunition (except rifle) and from 2 to 4 loads of varying fuel. The tank armies fighting on the external perimeter of encirclement, as an average during the operation, consumed from 5.5 to 7 loads of diesel fuel, 4-5.2 loads

of gasoline and from 2 to 4 units of fire of ammunition. In weight terms, the consumption of ammunition, fuel, food and other materiel averaged over the operation up to 20,000-25,000 tons in the combined-arms armies and 15,000-18,000 tons in the tank ones.(2)

Consumption of Materiel by Armies in Encirclement Operations*

Materiel	Combined-Arms Armies (on inner perimeter of encirclement)		Tank Armies (on external perimeter of encirclement)	
	Average per Day	Average per Operation (8-10 days)	Average per Day	Average per Operation (12-15 days)
<u>Ammunition (units of fire):</u>				
Rifle	0.12-0.18	1.3-1.5	0.08-0.1	0.8-1.2
Artillery	0.35-0.4	3.0-3.5	0.15-0.25	2.0-2.8
Tank	0.22-0.3	2.5-3.0	0.3 -0.4	3.0-3.5
Antiaircraft	0.28-0.35	2.8-3.0	0.2 -0.3	3.2-4.0
<u>Fuel (loads):</u>				
Gasoline	0.20-0.30	2.5-4.0	0.3 -0.35	4.0-5.2
Diesel Fuel	0.15-0.20	2.0-3.0	0.35-0.45	5.5-7.0

* The table was compiled for the indicators of the Stalingrad, Korsun-Shevchenkivskiy, Belorussian, East Prussian, Berlin and Manchurian Operations: TsAMO [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 331, inv. 9762, file 18, sheets 73-78; "Tyl Sovetskoy Armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Rear Services of the Soviet Army in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, pp 136-141, 169-170; "Uchebnoye posobiye. Istoriya tyla" [Textbook. History of the Rear Services], VATT, 1974, pp 90-91; VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1976, pp 39-41.

The replenishing of consumed supplies in the course of encirclement operations was basically carried out by delivering materiel from the sections of the front and army depots on the ground and supplies loaded on motor transport of the mobile rear columns.

Motor transport carried out the crucial role in ensuring prompt delivery of materiel to the advancing troops. A characteristic feature of delivery by motor transport, and not only by the organic but also the army and the front, was the through delivery of ammunition and fuel directly to the troops, to the mechanized and tank corps, the divisions and separate brigades.(3) This substantially accelerated the replenishing of consumed supplies in the troops.

Such effective operation of motor transport was achieved by the servicing, fueling, dispatcher and control points which were widely set up on the main transport routes. The traffic of the motor columns enroute and in the loading and transloading areas was supervised by responsible officers and specially assigned operations groups of the rear headquarters. On the front and army VAD [military road], stations were set up for first aid, the rest and feeding of driver personnel. For example, on the VAD of the First Ukrainian Front in the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation, over 50 such stations were set up.(4) In the Belorussian Operation, stations for the rest and feeding of driver personnel were organized on the VAD of the Third and First Belorussian Fronts every 100-120 km. Continuous support made it possible for the personnel of the motor transport subunits to operate on the routes without returning to the field parking areas of their units.

The prompt delivery of materiel by motor transport was also aided by the centralized command of the motor transport formations and units by the deputy rear commanders through the operations groups of the rear and the careful organizing of freight handling in the areas of the rail heads (detraining stations), at the dumps and their sections. On the Second Ukrainian Front in the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation, for example, a special operations group of staff officers of the rear and all the main services of the front was sent to Fundukleyevka Station where were located the sections of the main front dumps and the PAB [mobile army depot] of the assault grouping armies. They ahead of time had obtained information on the arrival of rail transports and the status of the vehicle columns and subunits, they supervised the delivery of vehicles for loading and in accord with the established delivery sequence ensured the dispatch of the columns to the routes. If it was necessary to alter the route of the motor columns, the points or the dates for delivering the freight, the operations group issued the necessary orders and through the dispatcher and traffic control posts on the VAD carried out adjustment measures. The dispatcher and traffic control posts noted the time of the passing of the columns and reported the necessary information to the chief of the operations group. After generalizing, the data concerning the course of the delivery of materiel, the position and condition of the motor transport units and subunits were transmitted to the rear staff of the front.(5)

On the Transbaykal Front (Manchurian Operation) for accelerating the delivery of materiel to the troops of the assault grouping (the 53d Army, the 6th Guards Tank Army and the 39th Army) the front motor vehicle units and subunits operated on assigned delivery routes. This facilitated the work of the drivers, it substantially accelerated the delivery of cargo and provided a savings in fuel and the safekeeping of motor vehicle equipment.

The increased effective operation of motor transport helped to promptly deliver the materiel essential for the troops. However, this problem was not completely resolved by just the forces of motor transport in the course of the operations. In certain operations extensive use was made of air transport as well as local means of transport for uninterrupted support of the troops fighting on the inner and particularly the exterior perimeters of encirclement. For example, air transport was employed for emergency delivery of fuel and ammunition to the troops fighting on the exterior perimeter in the

Stalingrad, Voronezh-Kastornoye, Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy, Belorussian, Lwow-Sandomierz, Manchurian and other operations. Thus, in the Stalingrad Operation, for supporting the mobile groups of the Southwestern and Stalingrad Fronts, Hq SHC assigned two air transport divisions. At the end of December, the division's units were delivering ammunition and fuel to the XXIV Tank Corps fighting in the area of Tatsinskaya Station and were then employed for the emergency delivery of materiel to the 2d Guards Army repelling the counterstrike of Manstein's tank grouping.(6) In the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation, military transport aviation delivered 65 tons of ammunition, 620 rockets and 49 tons of fuel to the troops fighting on the external perimeter of encirclement.(7) In the Belorussian Operation, 40 LI-2 aircraft were assigned from the reserve of Hq SHC to the First Belorussian Front for the emergency delivery of fuel and ammunition to the horse-mechanized group of Lt Gen I. A. Pliyev.(8)

A significant amount of air shipments was carried out in the Manchurian Operation for the Transbaykal Front. Upon the decision of the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Troops in the Far East, the front received two military air transport divisions (260 LI-2 and SI-47 aircraft). From 13 August through 3 September, these planes from the front dumps in the areas of Tamtsag-Bulak, Choybalsan and Chita delivered to the troops of the assault grouping some 2,072 tons of fuel and 186 tons of ammunition, including 593 tons of diesel fuel and 284.8 tons of gasoline for the 6th Guards Tank Army.(9)

For supporting the troops fighting in the first echelon of this front, very efficient use was also made of the liberated rail sections. Thus, after the crossing of the Greater Khingan and with the coming out of the main grouping of the front on the Manchurian Plain, materiel was transported for the 53d Army, the 39th Army and the 6th Guards Tank Army by a combined method: from Borzya Station to Hailar Station the freight was carried over the Union-gauge railroad, from Hailar to Halun-Arshan over the front VAD by motor transport and then over the intact railroad sections to the army railheads. On 18 August 18 supply trains arrived at Hailar Station for transloading onto motor transport, and 10 of these carried fuel.

In the Stalingrad counteroffensive, local cart transport was employed for delivering materiel to the advancing troops. Thus, for supplying fuel and ammunition to the tank and mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front, around 1,000 ox teams were employed each of which could pull up to a ton of freight. In the Vistula-Oder Operation, in the encirclement of the enemy Poznan Grouping with the reaching of the Oder by the troops of the First Belorussian Front, upon the decision of the front military council, around 400 operational supply vehicles were assigned from the tank armies for supplying fuel and ammunition, and these as part of the front motor columns made almost 700-km runs between Warsaw and Bromberg.

The integrated employment of the different types of transport was a reliable basis for interrupted logistic support for the troops in all stages of the encirclement and destruction operations. This was also aided by the prompt maneuvering of supplies and by the moving up of the head sections of the field army depots (GOPAB) and the sections of the front dumps with supplies of fuel, ammunition and food behind the advancing troops. Here the GOPAB of the armies

fighting on the external perimeter of encirclement were moved by motor transport and deployed on the ground in new areas, as a rule, every 2 or 3 days. The sections of the main front dumps were moved forward as the rail routes were rebuilt and were located at the head reconstruction stations as close as possible to the GOPAB.

Positive results in logistic support for the troops in encirclement operations were also achieved by close cooperation of the rear services of adjacent fronts and armies, by redistributing the supplies available in the fronts (armies) and by changing the delivery routes. In certain encirclement operations, for example, the Stalingrad, Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy and Belorussian, for promptly creating the established supplies in the armies of the assault groupings, upon the decision of the military councils of the fronts, the supply standards at the front dumps were temporarily reduced and the basic quantity of ammunition, fuel and other essential materiel was sent primarily to the troops and to the forward army dumps. This made it possible in a limited time to more fully supply the assault groupings. Subsequently, as the supply trains arrived, the supplies were replenished at the front dumps.

The promptly executed maneuver of delivery routes helped in the Stalingrad Operation in the interrupted logistic support of the advancing troops. Thus, at the beginning of December 1942, when the troops of the assault grouping of the Stalingrad Front, having encircled the enemy together with the Southwestern Front, reached the area of Kalach, Karpovka, Krivomuzginskaya, upon orders of the staff of the Soviet Army Rear Services, a portion of the centralized supply trains moving toward this front was shifted to the zone of the Don Front to the rail sector of Povorino, Stalingrad. Here a railhead was organized for the Stalingrad Front at Kachalino and in the area of this on 4 December sections of the front dumps for ammunition, fuel and food were set up. For directing their operation and ensuring the prompt dispatch of delivered freight to the troops, an operations group was sent here headed by the deputy chief of the rear of the Stalingrad Front, Maj Gen I. S. Savinov. (10)

In the aim of the quicker destruction of the surrounded Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy grouping, the 27th Army from 13 February 1944 was transferred to the Second Ukrainian Front. Its supply of ammunition, fuel and other materiel was carried out over the rail link of Fastov, Belaya Tserkov, in the zone of the First Ukrainian Front.

Of important significance in organizing logistic support for the troops in encirclement operations was the employment of local equipment and captured equipment. As in the other operations of the Great Patriotic War, the rear bodies of the fronts and armies carried out extensive work to procure food, fodder and fuel in the rear areas and to repair damaged special military equipment. For example, in the Korsun-Shevchenkovskiy Operation, the 53d Army of the Second Ukrainian Front from local procurement provided: 100 percent of the bread, 94 percent of the groats, 38 percent of the meat products, 88 percent of the fodder grain and 100 percent of the hay. (11) The extensive use of local and captured supplies increased the stability of logistic support for

the troops and to a significant degree reduced the need of the fronts for transport.

The experience of logistic support for the troops in operations involving the encirclement and destruction of large enemy groupings convincingly confirmed the important role of material resources in achieving victory over the enemy. In these operations the requirements of the troops for ammunition, fuel and other materiel increased and were marked by significant unevenness in their consumption depending upon the missions being carried out by the troops. Thus, formations fighting on the inner perimeter and destroying the encircled enemy grouping consumed significantly more ammunition and engineer equipment. But the formations advancing on the external perimeter as a rule required more fuel and primarily diesel fuel.

As the experience of the Great Patriotic War was to show, for promptly replenishing the consumed supplies in the course of the operation, the sections of the army and front dumps with the supplies of the main types of materiel had to be moved up behind the troops fighting on the external perimeter of encirclement, the ammunition and fuel had to be flexibly maneuvered and local and captured supplies promptly detected and employed.

The experience gained during the years of the Great Patriotic War in organizing logistic support for the troops in encirclement operations has not lost its pertinence in our times. It must be studied creatively, in accord with the specific conditions of preparing and carrying out the operations.

FOOTNOTES

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 220, inv. 5836, file 2, sheets 55-56, 74-75; folio 67, inv. 20089, file 46, sheet 73.
2. "Uchebnoye posobiye. Istoriya tyla" [Textbook. History of Rear Services], VAITT, 1974, pp 90-91.
3. TsAMO, folio 228, inv. 505, file 17, sheets 158-160.
4. Ibid., folio 67, inv. 20089, file 43, sheet 62.
5. Ibid., file 46, sheets 73-74.
6. Ibid., folio 220, inv. 20185, file 1, sheet 70.
7. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 7, 1969, p 50.
8. Ibid., No 8, 1974, p 84.
9. Arkhiv VAITT [Archives of the Military Academy of the Rear and Transport], inv. No 38, copy 3, sheets 71-72.
10. TsAMO, folio 220, inv. 5836, file 2, sheets 53-56.

11. Ibid., folio 202, inv. 53641, file 8, sheets 77-85.

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EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN VIEWS ON POSSIBLE NATURE OF WARS

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Lt Gen V. A. Aleksandrov published under the rubric "In Foreign Armies"]

[Text] The victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War had a profound impact on the postwar development of mankind. The defeat of German Nazism and Japanese militarism led to the collapse of reactionary regimes in a number of the European and Asian states and established good conditions in many countries of the world for the struggle of the working masses for their social and national liberation. With the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of European and Asian countries, the world socialist system was formed and the general crisis of capitalism grew deeper. The balance of political and class forces on the international scene changed in favor of peace, democracy and socialism.

Regardless of the fundamental changes which occurred, the U.S. ruling circles, proceeding from the interests of the most reactionary groups of monopolistic capital, worked out plans for achieving world rule. For these purposes, they planned to weaken and eliminate the socialist system, to suppress the revolutionary movement, to delay the collapse of the colonial system, to reinforce their dominant position in the capitalist world and halt the process of the general weakening of capitalism.

Military force was put forward as the main instrument for achieving foreign policy goals. This required special attention for the elaboration in American military theory of the questions of the nature of a future war, as well as the methods of waging it and achieving victory.

Proceeding from the supposition of U.S. "atomic superiority" over the Soviet Union, the American military-political leadership felt that a future war would be waged not for attrition but rather for annihilation and destruction. In this context the official documents termed such a war "total." In the opinion of the American ruling circles, such a war should be waged by the United States and its allies to the complete defeat of the enemy, that is, the elimination of the world socialist system.

The development of nuclear weapons in the USSR at the end of the 1940's forced the American military command to begin revising its views on the possible nature of a war. In American military literature the thesis was advanced of a "central war" by which one understood an armed conflict in which nuclear weapons would be employed without fail and military operations would extend not only to Soviet territory but also to the United States.(1) The concept of a "central war" did not gain official recognition. However, two key provisions of this -- the obligatory employment of nuclear weapons and the possible extension of military operations to American territory -- had a substantial impact on the American views concerning the nature of a war. It was recognized that under the new conditions the nature of a war would more fully reflect the term "universal war" used officially for the first time in a directive of the U.S. National Security Council NSC 162/2 adopted in October 1953. A number of provisions from this directive was set out in January 1954 by the then U.S. Secretary of State Dulles. These were named the strategy of "massive retaliation" the essence of which was American readiness to launch a massed nuclear strike against the USSR at a place and under circumstances of its own choice.

On the basis of the Directive NSC-162/2, the Joint Chiefs of Staff worked out a memorandum which pointed out that "in the event of an all-out war, a vitally important element in U.S. strategy" should be the nuclear potential of "massive retaliation." The memorandum also pointed to the necessity of employing tactical nuclear weapons by the American troops and their allies. In this context, the basis for the development of the nuclear forces should be the creating of weapons capable of hitting targets deep in the probable enemy territory and at the same time suitable for use on the battlefield.(2)

In the 1950's, within the strategy of "massive retaliation," the Eisenhower Administration began to work out variations for employing nuclear weapons in limited armed conflicts and this was reflected in the Directive NSC-5501 signed in January 1955. In particular, it stated: "The United States will not allow itself to abandon the use of nuclear weapons even in a local situation, if...the weapons will best serve the interests of American security."(3) An example of such a situation was the confrontation with China in line with the exacerbation of the situation around Quemoy and Matsu Islands (1958) when the American administration was prepared to take the decision for employing nuclear weapons with limited goals.

The departure from a rigid orientation on unleashing an all-out nuclear war in the mid-1950's was brought about by a whole series of factors. In line with the development of hydrogen weapons in our nation, the American ruling circles had to show a more cautious approach to the problem of "brinkmanship." The launching of the world's first earth satellite by the Soviet Union in 1957 showed the inevitability of a retaliatory attack against American territory in the event of America's unleashing of war against the USSR.

As a consequence of the collapse of the American military aggression in Korea and the intervention in Indochina, the American military-political leadership has raised the question of working out forms and methods for combating the peoples who have set out on the path of national liberation. Thus, in parallel with elaborating the problems of employing strategic nuclear weapons,

research and development have commenced on the employment of American armed forces in various regions of the world, and primarily in the zones of the national liberation movement. As has been written by the prominent American political scientist Osgood, "the working out of the problems of limited war was linked to a period when the main aim of American policy was to contain international communism by preventing or defeating domestic and external aggression in the Third World countries."(4)

By the end of the 1950's and the beginning of the 1960's, the basic views had developed among the American military-political leadership on "limited wars." The limitations were envisaged in terms of goals, the weapons to be employed and the objectives to be hit as well as the geographic scale. Thus, in the opinion of American military specialists, it was felt that in a limited war the goal would not be set of a complete victory over the enemy. The limitations in terms of the weapons employed assumed the use of not only nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons but also conventional weapons. Wars could be conducted the limits of which were restricted to a certain geographic area within a theater of operations.(5)

In 1957, H. Kissinger, Adm A. Bassard and others came forward with the theory of a "limited tactical nuclear war." The well-known researcher A. Enthoven advanced the idea of the possibility of conducting a large-scale limited war in Europe. However, official recognition of a "limited war" as an independent type of war was gained only with the adoption of the "flexible response" strategy by the J. Kennedy Administration.

Consequently, at that time U.S. military doctrine recognized the possibility of the involvement of American armed forces in two types of wars: all-out nuclear and limited. Here is how Gen M. Taylor, one of the authors of the "flexible response" strategy wrote about the possible nature of these wars: "Having recognized the limitedness of our atomic deterrent forces, we should correspondingly reassess the concept of all-out war, viewing it as the synonym of the exchange of nuclear strikes between the United States and the USSR. Consequently, all other forms of military operations should be considered as limited wars. The question of employing atomic weapons in nuclear wars could be viewed considering that the basic emphasis would be made on conventional weapons with the constant readiness to employ tactical nuclear weapons in those...instances when this would be in our national interests."(6)

The further strengthening of the socialist countries, their increased defense capability as well as the upsurge in the national liberation movement led the United States to reassess its strategic views. After the concept of "excluding cities (counterforce)" in 1964, the concept of "limited damage" was proposed. Its essence was that the enemy's strategic nuclear weapons must be damaged to a point which would ensure reduction to a "acceptable level of American losses in industrial potential and population." For carrying out this concept they proposed employing the American strategic offensive and defensive forces as well as means for protecting military-industrial installations and political centers from nuclear explosions.(7) The concept of "guaranteed destruction" formulated in March 1965 by the U.S. Secretary of Defense R. McNamara now proceeded from the necessity of "causing unacceptable harm for any aggressor or coalition of aggressors at any stage in the possible

exchange of strategic nuclear strikes as well as after the launching against us (the United States.--Author) of a surprise nuclear attack."(8) By unacceptable damage the Pentagon experts understood the destruction of from one-fourth to one-third of the population and approximately two-thirds of the nation's industrial potential.

The nation's military-economic and scientific-technical capabilities and the designated concepts in the 1960's determined the views of the American military-political leadership on the nature of all-out war. It was felt that this would be waged between coalitions headed by the United States and USSR. The armed struggle would be of an exceptionally intense nature with the use of the strategic nuclear forces as well as general-purpose forces and encompass both Soviet territory and U.S. (a "central war"). The best method for entering such a war was felt to be the launching of a preemptive nuclear strike against the USSR and primarily against its strategic weapons. Such an attack should ensure not only the achieving of victory in a nuclear war but also the "limiting of damage" to the United States and its allies. At the same time, retaliatory actions were not excluded in the course of which the task of the "guaranteed destruction" of the Soviet Union was to be carried out. Thus, according to the calculations of American specialists, even one-third of the nuclear missile submarines which existed at that time should be capable of destroying up to 20 percent of the Soviet population and 75 percent of the industry. The reserve of nuclear forces should ensure the concluding of the war and postwar "security."(9)

The ideas of the strategy of a "flexible response" were actually tested only as concerns the "limited wars." But they, as the results of the Vietnamese War were to show, did not correspond to the balance of forces in the world or to the conditions of the theater of operations, they did not consider the determination of the heroic Vietnamese people until victory to fight for their independence and for this reason suffered a complete collapse. Regardless of this, the American military-political leadership continued to further elaborate the theory of so-called "counterinsurgency wars."

The constant increase in the might of the socialist commonwealth countries and the collapse of U.S. military ventures in various regions of the world, primarily in Vietnam, led the Nixon Administration to the conclusion that the "flexible response" strategy did not correspond to the spirit of the times and brought about the necessity of formulating a "more realistic" strategy for the 1970's. After the proclamation of the "Nixon Guam Doctrine" in 1969, the adopting of the strategy of a "realistic deterrence" was announced.

The new strategy, like the strategy of "flexible response," was based upon the idea of a war against the USSR and the socialist commonwealth countries but had an even more aggressive nature. In accord with this strategy, the U.S. armed forces were to be ready to participate in a strategic nuclear war, a nuclear war in a theater, a conventional war in a theater as well as in antiguerrilla and counterinsurgency operations.

The term "strategic nuclear war" employed in the official documents instead of "all-out nuclear war" emphasized the leading role of the strategic forces in an all-out nuclear war. It was felt that the belligerents would use the

entire existing arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons and their employment could jeopardize the very existence of the enemy.(10)

Although the views on the nature of an all-out (strategic) nuclear war as a whole did not change with the adoption of the "realistic deterrence" strategy, a search was initiated for an alternative to the concept of "guaranteed destruction." The results of this search were reflected in the "Memorandum of Decisions in the Area of National Security No. 242" signed by the U.S. president on 17 January 1974. The memorandum pointed out that the U.S. strategic offensive forces should be capable "holding hostage a number of vitally important enemy installations and control the time and pace of launching attacks."(11) A new feature in the plans for conducting a strategic nuclear war was the demand for the destruction of at least 70 percent of Soviet industry in order not to permit the postwar reconstruction of the Soviet economy.

Within the context of the "realistic deterrence" strategy, for the first time official recognition was given to an independent type of "limited nuclear war" which was given the name of a "theater nuclear war" or an armed conflict conducted within one theater of war by the U.S. armed forces and their allies.(12) Its basic content involved the launching of a nuclear strike against the main groupings of the armed forces and the establishing of advantageous conditions for achieving victory over the enemy. It was felt that the chief means for waging this war would be the nuclear forces for a theater of war the employment of which should ensure the carrying out of the following missions: 1) prevent the enemy from achieving the goals of the war in conducting military operations by conventional means; 2) forcing the enemy by launching limited nuclear strikes against it to immediately break off fighting; 3) to control when necessary the course of subsequent fighting up to the point of the enemy's agreement to talks; 4) reducing the probability of the conducting of subsequent armed actions by the enemy.(13) In such a war, in the opinion of the American leadership, limited political and strategic tasks could be carried out and the possibility excluded of the shifting of hostilities to U.S. territory.

In defining a conventional war in a theater of war, in the American official documents basic attention was given to limitations on the employed means of combat and the geographic limits of military operations. General demands were formulated on the forces for waging it. Thus, for achieving the aims of a war, it was recommended that the minimally necessary forces be activated. The equipment and training of the troops should correspond to the conditions of the theater of war and the strength of the fielded forces be dependent upon the degree of the probable outbreak of a war, the intensity of military operations as well as the tasks to be carried out by the troops. The presence of well equipped and trained forces with conventional weapons, in the opinion of the U.S. leadership, would make it possible to carry out the set tasks without employing nuclear weapons.

The U.S. armed forces were to be employed primarily in developed theaters of operations against a well armed army while military operations against Third World countries were to be entrusted chiefly to the forces of American allies. This was reflected in the U.S. Army Field Manual FM-100-5 published in 1976.

In contrast to the manuals from the period of the aggression in Indochina, it gave great attention to air defense, to the employment of electronics, to chemical defense, rear support and to conducting military operations with a numerical minority. The experience of the war in Vietnam was taken into account on the questions of cooperation between the infantry, artillery and close support helicopters.(14)

The end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's were characterized by clarifications in the concepts of "all-out" and "limited" war under the new conditions. By an "all-out" war one had come to understand an armed conflict between the great powers and the coalitions headed by them in which all the resources of the belligerents would be employed and their existence as states would be threatened; by a "limited" war one meant an armed conflict between two or more countries which did not reach the level of an "all-out" war.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense C. Weinberger in June 1981 officially announced that in the 1980's a strategy of "direct confrontation" with the USSR would be the basis of American military doctrine and its essence came down to a direct confrontation between the United States and the USSR on global and regional scales. In accord with this, the task was set of preparing the U.S. armed forces to conduct any war (nuclear and conventional, brief and extended, local and all-out, bilateral and coalition) and to participate in any of the possible conflicts.

The Directive of the Secretary of Defense "Policy in the Area of Employing Nuclear Weapons" adopted in July 1982 envisages four variations for the employment of nuclear weapons: massive, selective, limited and regional.(15) And these variations are envisaged for waging both a strategic nuclear war as well as a theater nuclear war.

C. Weinberger has been the author of the idea of a possible all-out conventional war formulated within the context of the concept of a "geographic escalation." With the outbreak of a limited conventional war in one of the theaters, this envisages the extending of military operations to other theaters of war "where the enemy is most vulnerable." The views of the current American administration on such wars have been set out in the "Instructions in the Defense Area for the 1984-1988 Fiscal Years." This documents states: "The nature of a future war to a significant degree will differ from all previously known wars. Military actions will be characterized by great intensity and duration and the weapons employed in it will possess significantly greater accuracy as well as probably great rate of fire and mobility. A particular feature of military actions will be the intense employment of electronic countermeasures and, possibly, chemical, bacteriological and nuclear weapons."(16)

The new strategy proceeds from the possibility of conducting an extended nuclear war and achieving victory in it. For this purpose new strategic nuclear weapons systems are being developed equipped with increased survivability and steps are being taken within the Strategic Defense Initiative to establish a broad-scale space-based weapons system. Development is being accelerated on nuclear medium-range weapons, primarily by deploying the Pershing-2 missiles and land- and air-based cruise missiles. This makes

it possible for the American military command not only to substantially increase the capacity for launching the first strike in an all-out nuclear war but also to establish powerful nuclear forces in the theater of war. The presently deployed U.S. medium-range weapons in Europe and which can be quickly reinforced by sea-based cruise missiles create, in the opinion of the American military-political leadership, the prerequisites for conducting a nuclear war in this theater of operations without the involvement of the American strategic offensive forces.

The accelerated development of systems of high-precision conventional weapons and the reorganization of the ground forces of the United States and its NATO allies are aimed at ensuring the capacity for achieving victory in a modern war by conventional means, too. It is assumed that as a result of carrying out the programs to modernize the armed forces of the United States and the other leading capitalist states, conditions will be created for conducting intense, highly maneuverable military operations. In the course of these simultaneous attacks will be launched by conventional means with the massed employment of all branches of aviation, conventionally-armed cruise missiles and reconnaissance-attack complexes in the aim of hitting enemy groupings to the entire depth of the operational configuration [the concept of an "airland operation (engagement)"], in addition to state and military installations in the strategic depth. The results of these attacks are to be employed for defeating the opposing enemy piecemeal with the coming out of ground forces and airborne troops in the enemy's flanks and rear.

The current American military strategy aimed at direct confrontation with the USSR is based upon a presumptuous confidence of the military-political leadership in the technological superiority of the U.S. military-production base and on the fact that the NATO bloc possesses a large amount of material and human resources which, according to the estimates of the U.S. military-political leadership, under the conditions of the extended arms race by the beginning of the 1990's will bring about the "complete and indisputable military supremacy of the United States" and the readiness of its armed forces to successfully conduct military operations in any types of wars: universal and limited, nuclear and conventional.

Thus, the policy of the U.S. imperialist circles which are ready to sacrifice the fates of entire peoples is strengthening the danger that weapons of monstrous destructive force can be put into use. Ultimately this threatens a global military conflict.

FOOTNOTES

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DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENSIVE TACTICS OF RUSSIAN ARMY IN WORLD WAR I

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[Article by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Docent, Col B. P. Frolov, published under the rubric "Scientific Papers and Information"]

[Text] With the entry of Russia into World War I, the command of the Russian Army in organizing combat operations, including defensive combat, followed the concepts of the 1912 "Field Service Manual" which at that time was considered the best among the analogous manuals of European armies.

The basic aim of the defensive, the manual pointed out, was by all methods and means to break up the enemy with fire and, having undermined its forces, to go over to the offensive and destroy it.(1)

For conducting defensive combat in a division, the basic (main) defensive position was to be established and this consisted of separate strongpoints. The latter were group rifle trenches, individual fortifications and local objects adapted for the defensive (Diagram 1). The spaces between the strongpoints, in reaching 600-1,200 m, were covered by small arms and machine gun fire. In order to check the enemy advance and allow time for the troops holding the main position to prepare for combat, forward strongpoints were established ahead for the battle outposts. Deep in the defenses, at a distance of 1 km from the forward edge, a rear position was established. This was occupied by the general (divisional) reserve. It was recommended that prior to combat the infantry not occupy the trenches but remain concealed close to them. If there were no protected areas, then the infantry was to deploy in the trenches and engineer works.(2) The width of a division's defensive zone was 4-5 km. The depth of the defenses reached 1.5-2 km.

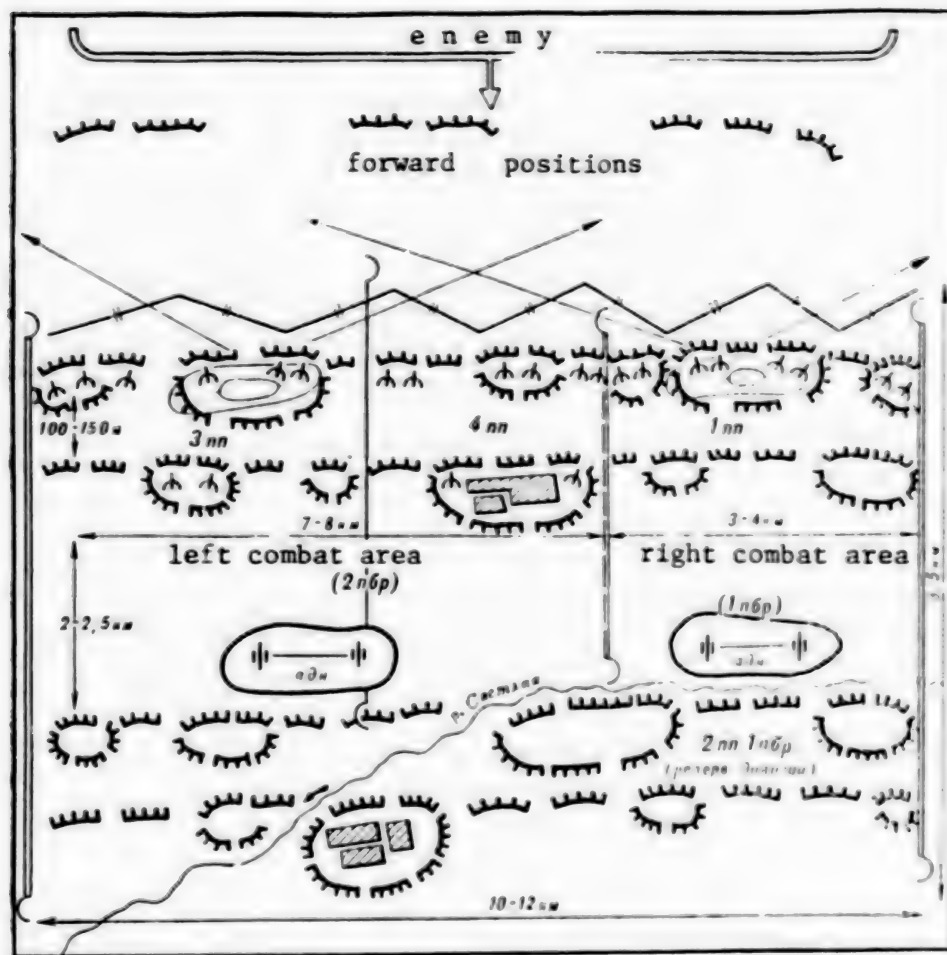


Diagram 2. Organization of a Division's Defenses at End of 1914 (Variation)

The battle formation of an infantry division consisted of combat areas of the brigades, regiments, and in a number of instances the battalions and the general (divisional) reserve, as a rule, consisting of a regiment. The special reserves (brigade, regimental, battalion) had the mission of reinforcing the units and subunits of their combat area. The main organizers of defensive combat were the commanders of the combat areas, usually commanders of brigades (regiments) and sometimes even battalion commanders.

The artillery firing positions were established a distance of 0.6-1 km from the forward edge. The main task of the artillery was to neutralize enemy artillery.(3)

Thus, the defensive at the start of the war was organized as a focal one. It was based upon individual strongpoints, the fire of small arms and artillery. The defenses were of shallow depth and in terms of their purpose were only antipersonnel. But the experience of the first operations showed that such defenses did not possess sufficient strength, particularly in repelling massed infantry attacks supported by heavy artillery. For this reason, in the concluding operations of the 1914 campaign, measures began to be employed to improve the defenses. Thus, during the Warsaw-Ivangorod and Lodz Offensive Operations (October-December 1914), when because of the suffered casualties (as a consequence of the enemy's significant fire superiority) and the overextended lines of communications, the Russian troops had to go over to the defensive, in the divisions in a number of instances solid lines of trenches were established along with the strongpoints. Thus, in the 9th and 32d Infantry Divisions of the 3d Army, the 21st and 52d Infantry Divisions of the 4th Army, the 46th and 73d Infantry Divisions of the 9th Army(4) and a number of other formations at the end of 1914, on the main position they began organizing two solid lines of trenches with platoon and company strongpoints incorporated in them and in the rear position, one or two lines. Here the distance of the rear position from the main one was 2-2.5 km (Diagram 2).

At times ahead of the main position forward points were established and these played an important role in the defensive system. In endeavoring to capture them, the enemy was often forced to deploy prematurely into battle formation and this slowed down the rate of advance and made it possible for the defending troops to prepare to repel the attack. The main position was defended by the first echelon regiments of the division. At the rear position was located the general reserve and the artillery was between the positions. The depth of the division's defenses rose to 3.5 km and the width of the defensive zone reached 10-12 km.

The defending troops repelled the enemy offensive by small arms, machine gun and artillery fire. The enemy groupings which had broken into the defenses were destroyed or thrown back to the starting position by counterattacks of the general reserve.(5) Indicative in this regard was, for example, the combat of the 31st Infantry Division of the 3d Army on 23 December 1914. Large forces of the enemy had attacked the division's units. The main thrust occurred against the combat area of the 2d Brigade which was defending on the division's left flank. Regardless of courageous resistance by the 123d Koslov and 123d Voronezh Infantry Regiments, after a series of fierce attacks the Germans succeeded in capturing their main position and driving into the

division's defenses. A critical situation developed. The enemy had already begun to move up reserves in order to exploit the achieved success. But at this moment the Russian artillery troops brought about a change in the course of combat. Acting boldly and with initiative, the men of the 5th and 6th batteries of the 31st Artillery Brigade which were at an indirect firing position quickly rolled their guns to direct laying and opened rapid fire with grape shot against the close extended lines of advancing German infantry. The enemy suffered enormous losses and panic commenced in its ranks. Benefiting from the favorably developing situation, the division commander committed his reserve to battle. With a rapid bayonet attack, the 122d Tambov Infantry Regiment supported by several subunits of the 2d Infantry Brigade and artillery threw the Germans with heavy losses back beyond the forward edge and restored the previously held position.(6)

The defensive combat tactics of the Russian troops continued to improve also in the 1915 campaign. The main position now included three lines of trenches, the distances between which were increased to 200-300 m while the depth of the main position rose, consequently, to 400-600 m. In a number of instances wire obstacles were set out ahead of the main position on two or three rows of stakes and these were covered by rifle and machine gun fire. Communications trenches were built in exposed areas within the main position. For protecting the personnel in the trenches against shrapnel, the building of dugouts and overhead deflectors was widespread. The organizing of fire cooperation between the lines of trenches was an essential condition. The overall depth of a division's defenses reached 5-6 km. The tactical densities, however, continued to remain low: 1.3-1.6 infantry battalions per kilometer of front, 4-5 guns and up to 3 machine guns.(7)

The command posts were brought closer and closer to the troops. While in 1914, the divisional staffs were usually located 10 km and more away from the battle formations of the troops, at the beginning of the 1915 campaign, in many formations they were located 4-7 km from the forward edge, that is, approximately on the level of the divisional reserve. Such a situation largely contributed to achieving stable command over the division's units in the course of defensive combat and made it possible to respond more effectively to all changes in the situation.

In May-September 1915, the Russian troops conducted basically a maneuvering defense. Here extensive use was made of counterattacks in the aim of restoring the lost situation or even for thwarting enemy envelopments and outflankings. In the designated period the units and formations often had to fight in broad zones. Thus, the width of a division's defensive zone sometimes reached 10-15 km.(8) However, even with insufficient tactical densities and the significant enemy fire superiority, the Russian troops showed high skill in conducting a maneuvering defense.

With the going over of both belligerents, in the autumn of 1915 to a positional defensive, the questions of the engineer organization of the field underwent further development. Although in the infantry divisions, as before, two positions were organized, now each of them included two or three full-profile trenches equipped with machine gun nests and communications trenches, making it possible to covertly carry out a maneuver in the course of combat.

For sheltering the personnel from enemy artillery fire, the building of dugouts and shelters with a strong wood and earth roof became widespread. Great importance began to be given to antichemical defense of the troops. For this purpose they were supplied with gas masks and cloaks (individual protection) and in addition special shelters were provided (collective defense). Ahead of the forward edge, as a rule, wire obstacles were built. The distance between the trenches was 100-150 m and between positions up to 4 km. The rear position, as before, served as the starting line for counterattacks by the reserves. However, the configuration of the battle formation and the width of the division's defensive zone did not change. The holding of the first trench was considered the main task of defensive combat.

In the campaigns of 1916-1917, tactical defenses underwent further development. These became deeper and capable of withstanding massed enemy strikes launched on narrow sectors of the front. During this period of the war the tactical defenses of the Russian Army now consisted of two zones (according to the terminology of those times, "positions"): the first (the "troop position") and the second ("rear position") which were 5-8 km apart. Each of these included two positions ("zones"): the main and the rear and these usually consisted of three trenches which continued to be called as before "lines of trenches."

The quantitative and qualitative growth of German artillery forced the Russian Command to increase the distance between the positions to 6-8 km. Each of them, with the exception of the full-profile trenches, had a system of communications trenches and strongpoints ("centers of resistance") prepared for all-round defense. These included various sorts of shelters, dugouts and group trenches and the distance between these did not exceed 150 m. As a rule, wire obstacles were set out ahead of the forward edge on several rows of stakes ("man-made obstacles areas").(9) Their distance from the first trench was 70-100 m. The zone of wire obstacles included two or three rows of stakes. Rather frequently several zones of such obstacles were built with up to 20 rows of stakes. The distance between the trenches was increased: the second trench was a distance of 200-300 m from the first, while the third was 500-1,000 m from the second. The first trench was defended by the first echelon companies of the battalion, the second by the battalion reserves and the third by the regimental reserves. A company occupied 250-400 m along the front, a battalion had up to 1,300 m and a regiment 2-4 km. The division's reserves were positioned on the second (rear) position.

The depth of the first defensive zone rose to 8-9 km. The overall depth of the tactical defenses of the Russian Army during the positional period of the war reached 15-30 km(10) (in the west, even in 1918, this did not exceed 20 km). The width of the defensive zone of a division was somewhat narrowed and was now 8-10 km. Such a configuration of the defenses made it possible for the troops to covertly position reserves assigned to increase the effort and carry out counterattacks.

During the positional period of the war, a fire plan was created as one of the elements of the defense's configuration. This included sectors of concentrated small arms, machine gun and artillery fire ahead of the forward edge, on the flanks and boundaries between the units and subunits and

sometimes deep in the defenses, and lines of artillery defensive fire on the approaches to the forward edge. The intervals between the strongpoints were also covered by small arms and machine gun fire. Great attention was given to establishing "pockets of fire" deep in the defenses. The appropriate men and weapons were assigned for covering the flanks and boundaries. The fire plan in the units and subunits was usually organized in combination with the man-made obstacles and natural obstructions.(11) Artillery occupied firing positions 2-4 km away from the forward edge. This made it possible to its main mass to fire at a range up to 4 km.(12)

By the war's end, the fire capability of an infantry division had increased by 2-2.5-fold. Tactical densities on the defensive had also risen substantially. In 1916-1917, these were 1.6-2 infantry battalions per kilometer of front, 5-8 guns and 10-15 machine guns. All of this brought about a further improvement and development of defensive combat tactics.

In line with the more complicated organization of combat operations on the defensive, the role of the divisional command increased and the centralized leadership of the defenses on the divisional scale was strengthened. During this period planning documents became rather widespread (defensive plans, plans for the combat employment of artillery, the engineer organization of the defensive zones, reconnaissance, logistic support and so forth). The main one was the plan of the defenses and this reflected: the overall concept of defensive combat, the missions of the troops, the positions of the reserves, variations for maneuvering the men and weapons, the axes of counterattacks, measures for air defense and antichemical defense and combat support, questions of cooperation, measures to check an enemy offensive (artillery counterpreparation fire, the lines of defensive fire and the sectors of the fire attack) and the organization of the rear.(13)

The plan of the defenses was usually worked out on the basis of the decision taken by the division commander for the defensive combat. As a rule, the taking of the decision was preceded by reconnaissance in the course of which the division commander in the field clarified the most important details necessary for planning the combat. Then the main questions of cooperation were agreed upon and this was usually organized according to stages of combat. Prompt reporting to the division commander and staff on the part of subordinate commanders concerning all changes in the situation as well as continuous reconnaissance were considered to be the guarantee for flexibility and efficiency of troop command in defensive combat. In the course of the fighting, as necessary, the commander could adjust his plan with individual combat orders.

Thus, during the positional period of the war, the divisional commander became the main organizer of defensive combat. The infantry combat group consisting of squad -- platoon was the basis of the battle formation and this group, in cooperating closely with the attached and supporting weapons, defended a sector of the trench or strongpoint.

As a consequence of the rapid destruction of the first trench by enemy artillery, the oversaturating of it with infantry, as had been done hitherto, and the stubborn struggle to hold it were not always effective.

Because of this, they began to practice the shifting of main efforts from the forward edge deep into the defenses. The main task of defensive combat was to hold not only and not so much the first trench as but rather the entire main position. The units and subunits occupying the defenses, without lessening the density of fire, shifted from an even distribution of men and weapons along the front to establishing strong centers of resistance on the most important sectors and the echeloning of these in depth.

In employing artillery on the defensive, from 1916, the Russian Command began to more widely mass it on the most important sectors. This entailed a centralized command of artillery fire on the scale of the formations. In repelling enemy attacks, artillery defensive fire was widely employed. In the aim of thwarting an enemy chemical attack, there was the widespread practice of artillery counterpreparation fire ("meeting artillery strike"). For increasing the effective use of artillery in defensive combat, from the divisional and attached artillery they began organizing infantry support groups according to the number of defensive combat areas.⁽¹⁴⁾ Artillery observers were sent up without fail to correct artillery fire on the forward edge and in a number of instances aviation was employed. Thus, defensive combat tactics in the Russian Army during the years of World War I took a significant step ahead. The development of the defensive was manifested primarily in the shift from a focal system to a trench one, in the establishing of defensive zones full of various man-made structures and weapons, in the increased depth of the defenses and tactical densities as well as in the rise and development of the fire plan.

During the war years, there was a clear tendency for a greater role to be played by the divisional level in the questions of organizing defensive combat. This made it possible to substantially improve coordination between the defending units and branches of troops. The bringing of the command posts closer to the battle formations made it possible to increase the stability and effectiveness of troop command.

In conducting defensive actions, the troops moved from an even, linear distribution of men and weapons along the front to the concentration of the main efforts on the most important sectors (areas). The maneuvering of men and weapons in the course of combat played a greater role. The most important component part of this became counterattacks which with skillful organization had a decisive influence on the course of the hostilities. The strength of the tactical defenses of the Russian Army increased in the course of the war as the combat capabilities and activity of the troops rose. By the war's end, defensive combat had assumed the nature of combined-arms combat where success is achieved solely as a result of joint efforts by all the branches of troops participating in it.

FOOTNOTES

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BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF ADM A. G. GOLOVKO

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[Article by Flt Adm V. N. Chernavin; the article was written on the occasion of the 80th birthday of A. G. Golovko]

[Text] I had heard about Arseniy Grigoryevich Golovko and his naval activities while a student, when I was studying in the Higher Naval School imeni M. V. Frunze. He had completed our school long before this and along with the names of many other graduates who had brought glory to the nation's senior naval institution of higher learning, his name was said with pride and respect. Certain teachers who knew the admiral personally as well as those who had fought under his leadership told us, the future officers, a good deal about Golovko's naval schooling and endeavored to get across his rich command experience. With amazement we became acquainted with the service record of Arseniy Grigoryevich. How many miles he had covered. How many levels of commander maturity he had reached! He had studied all our naval theaters and knew service in them....

I was very happy when in 1951 I was appointed to the Northern Fleet where this schooling had at one time arisen and taken shape. In truth, Adm Golovko was no longer there. At that time, in heading the Naval General Staff, he was the first deputy naval minister. But his good name continued to live in the deeds and accomplishments of the Northern Fleet sailors, and were passed from man to man. He himself often visited the fleet where the memorable and difficult war years had been spent and where his naval talent had truly become apparent and matured.

As Arseniy Grigoryevich himself was subsequently to admit, in his youth he did not even dream of being a sailor. Nor did any of his compatriots, as far as he knew, from the Cossack village of Prokhladnaya in the Northern Caucasus have such dreams. They were more interested in the land, in grain growing. However, when the party called upon the Komsomol to take sponsorship of the Navy and strengthen its ranks, the former rabfak [worker faculty] member and students of the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy, Arseniy Golovko in 1925 became an officer candidate at a naval school. Since then, he has always been associated with the navy, he has found his calling while the Navy in him has gained an extraordinary commander and military chief.

In order to justify the confidence of the party which Golovko soon joined, he had to study a great deal after completing the school and also instruct others. Service on the various fleets and flotillas alternated with a mastery of tactics and operational art in courses for advanced training of command personnel and in the Navy Academy. He himself taught: at courses and in school. Whatever position the young officer held, he stood out in purposefulness, the ability to analyze the most complex situation clearly and quickly and high responsibility for the assigned job.

In 1937, the chief of staff of the torpedo boat brigade of the Pacific Fleet, A. G. Golovko, was sent to fighting Spain as an advisor to the commander of the Cartagena Naval Base of the Republic Fleet. There he gained his first combat experience. After returning, A. G. Golovko commanded a destroyer division and he was the chief of staff of the Northern Fleet and commander of the Caspian and Amur Naval Flotillas.

In 1940, A. G. Golovko was appointed commander of the Northern Fleet. These were alarming times as World War II was already underway. In following the party's instructions, the new commander set immediate tasks for the fleet: the ships requiring overhaul should be sent to the yards while those that were seagoing and fit for battle would be provided with dependable basing and conditions created for mastering the theater in any weather; the personnel of all the formations and units day by day would improve their combat skill and increase combat readiness.

The measures adopted prior to the war were subsequently to prove effective. With the start of combat, unforeseen difficulties arose. Thus, more than 150 different vessels accumulated in Kola Bay. They had to be immediately shifted to safe ports. A. G. Golovko took a bold decision. Familiar with Nazi tactics from the fighting in Spain, he proposed that vessels be dispatched without an escort, one by one, with varying intervals, between the raids of enemy aviation which were marked by methodicalness and strictly set in time. Our aviation had the mission by raids against enemy airfields and naval bases and by intercepting enemy reconnaissance planes to support the move of the transports and vessels. Submarines and torpedo boats were sent at the same time for operating on the enemy sealanes. The operation came off successfully as the vessels without losses arrived at their destinations 3 days later. "The plan was correct," wrote Arseniy Grigoryevich in his diary then. "A risk was essential, effective and for this reason justified. Now it can be said that yet another clash of minds in the war at sea has been won by us here, in the Arctic."(1)

From the very start of the offensive of the enemy troops on the maritime sector, the enemy's plan was clear: to capture Rybachiy and Sredniy Peninsulas, to block Kola Bay and then seize Murmansk.

The July defensive battles of the 14th Army and the Northern Fleet which were of an active, mobile nature, played a crucial role in turning back the advance of the Nazi troops against Murmansk and Polyarnoye. Moreover, the fleet commander, Rear Adm A. G. Golovko, the military council member Div Commissar A. A. Nikolayev and the chief of staff Rear Adm S. G. Kucherov from the very

outset of hostilities correctly established that the enemy's most vulnerable point was the sealanes over which the enemy troops were supplied. Submarines, torpedo boats and aviation were sent to disrupt these sealanes.

the fleet's main base of Polyarnoye as everyone was expecting the return of submarine K-2 from a combat cruise. As soon as its silhouette could be seen at the entrance to the bay, a shot resounded. Those greeting the boat, including Golovko who had recently added another admiral's star to his shoulder boards several days before, exchanged glances in perplexity. However soon everything was clear. When the boat had moored by the wall, the submarine commander Capt 3d Rank V. P. Utkin together with the division commander Capt 2d Rank M. I. Gadzhiyev who had supported the cruise, headed toward the vice admiral.

"Comrade commander!" reported Utkin. "The submarine has returned from its combat cruise. We sank a transport with a displacement of 6,000 tons. In commemoration of our first victory, we fired a blank round from the cannon which had sunk the ship."

"Would that there were more such salutes," noted Arseniy Grigoryevich with a smile.

Soon thereafter the other ships learned about this instance and the response to it of the commander. Thus, with the approval of A. G. Golovko, the Northern Fleet submariners began a new tradition: with each victorious return from a cruise they notified their home base with gunnery rounds. The number of rounds corresponded to the number of enemy ships sunk. The tradition was picked up by the other fleet formations and units. Crew members of surface vessels also commemorated their victories with cannon rounds while the torpedo boat sailors and aviators used machine guns.

The commander gave particular attention to improving the tactical skills of the commanders and the combat skill of all the personnel. He supported everything new which arose in the course of combat: the use of masttop bombing and low-level torpedo dropping by aviation, the carrying out of operations on the enemy sealanes by diverse fleet forces, the use of the hanging screen method by submarines and many other nontraditional combat procedures which enriched naval art.

Arseniy Grigoryevich endeavored to personally see off the submarines and surface ships on their next cruise as well as meet them upon their return. Here he spoke with the commanders, the most outstanding officers, petty officers and sailors about the combat, he questioned them and analyzed in detail one or another instructive episode.

The analyses of the combat cruises by the commander played an inestimable role in the development of the officers. Usually after a report by one or another commander, a lively conversation ensued which frequently had a polemical nature. Arseniy Grigoryevich was interested in everything down to the smallest detail. In discussing the decisions taken by the commanders in the course of combat as well as the actions of individual crew members, he analyzed the possible variations and, having heard the opinion of those

present, evaluated them. Precisely at that time in the fleet the term of "Admiral Golovko's School" became established. Passing through this school were such subsequently well-known commanders as the submarine officers V. G. Starikov, I. I. Fisanovich, N. Ye. Yegorov, M. I. Gadzhiyev, I. A. Kolyshkin, F. A. Vidyayev, N. A. Lunin and G. I. Shchedrin, the torpedo boat officers A. O. Shabalin, A. V. Kuzmin, V. N. Alekseyev, S. D. Zyuzin and B. M. Lyakh, the aviators B. F. Safonov, V. N. Kiselev, A. A. Bashtyrkov and many others.

On 28 June 1942, A. G. Golovko returned to his diary: "Since the last entry a great deal of time and many events have occurred. We are now fighting in our second year. And the results of the war year in the Northern Theater are as follows: we have sunk 135 enemy vessels with a total tonnage of 583,400 tons and destroyed 412 aircraft. We have lost 56 vessels and 156 aircraft.... The overseas routes of our sealanes in the Northern Theater have become the primary route of national significance. There the fleet is expecting the greatest difficulties." (2)

The year 1943. The situation for the Northern Fleet on the maritime theater had developed successfully. The victories of the Soviet Army which had achieved a fundamental turning point in the war and the stability of the front on the Murmansk sector made it possible for the Northern Fleet sailors to increase the attacks on the maritime sector, to steadily defend their domestic and overseas sea routes and actively disrupt the enemy sealanes. This was a source of pleasure for the commander. "...The balance of the war has shifted in our favor. Time which leads to victory is working for us," he noted in his diary on 31 December. (3)

The talent of A. G. Golovko was particularly apparent in the autumn of 1944 during the Petsamo-Kirkenes Offensive Operation in the course of which tactical landing forces were employed. These were the most effective form of assisting the maritime flank of the ground troops under the specific conditions of the theater of operations. The close cooperation of the units and formations from the Karelian Front and the Northern Fleet which carried out the breakthrough on the isthmus of Sredniy Peninsula was organized by the commander of the Northern Defensive Area under the leadership of the fleet commander. Operational coordination of the fleet with the troops advancing on land was also planned in their carrying out of independent missions in the fight on the enemy sealanes and in supporting our own shipments. The actions of the naval forces with the actions of the ground troops were coordinated by Adm A. G. Golovko and his staff according to stages of the offensive and proceeding from the overall mission of the complete defeat of the defending enemy grouping.

several times with Arseniy Grigoryevich. I saw how moved he was when he spoke about the development prospects of the Soviet ocean-going fleet. He brought with him a breadth of views and the ability to look at military affairs through the prism of state interests. Engraved in my memory are the words said by Adm Golovko at a meeting in a submarine formation:

"The time is not far off when ships with nuclear propulsion will become the decisive might of the fleet. This is a command of the times.... We have

special hopes for you, the first commanders of the nuclear ships. Upon how quickly and how clearly you work out the questions of the daily operation of the equipment and weapons and the combat training of the crews will depend the development prospects of these submarines. The command is expecting from you specific proposals on their mastery, employment and improvement...."

Subsequently, in commanding the Northern Fleet, I am convinced that many officers and admirals in their work were endeavoring to imitate A. G. Golovko, in adopting such qualities as principledness, determination, initiative, boldness in decisions, sincerity and justness in dealings with subordinates and the capacity to find a common tongue with fellow servicemen.

FOOTNOTES

1. A. G. Golovko, "Vneste s flotom" [Together With the Fleet], 2d Edition, Revised and Supplemented, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1979, p 43.
2. Ibid., p 101.
3. Ibid., p 206.

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DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY OF SOVIET ARMED FORCES: JAN-DEC 1940

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[Chronology compiled by I. M. Nagayev, senior science associate at the Central State Archives of the Soviet Army]

[Text] 26 January -- By an order of the USSR NKO [USSR People's Commissar of Defense], the 1940 Fighter Aviation Field Manual (BUFA-40) was put into effect.

4 February -- The Directive of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Political Directorate No 29 was issued on the tasks of agitation propaganda work related to the Soviet-Finnish War.

2 March -- By an order of the NKO, reorganization was announced in the Military-Legal Faculty at the RKKA Military Legal Academy.

13 March -- The Politburo of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee adopted the Decree "On Military Retraining, Recertification of Party Committee Workers and on the Procedure for Mobilizing Them Into the RKKA."

19 March -- By an order of the NKO, the creation was announced of the Department for Military Artistic Literature under the Directorate of the Military Publishing House.

26-28 March -- The Plenum of the VKP(b) Central Committee reviewed the results of the Soviet-Finnish War and adopted the corresponding decision.

29 March -- By an order of the NKO, the Military Academy for Command and Navigator Personnel of the Red Army Air Forces (presently the Air Force Academy imeni Yu. A. Gagarin) was established.

14-17 April -- The RKKA Main Military Council reviewed the question of the results and lessons of the Soviet-Finnish War, the state of the armament and technical equipping of the Army and Navy and handed down a series of decisions.

3 May -- The directive was published of the RKKA Political Directorate No 124 concerning the establishing of forces for the military retraining of higher political personnel.

6 May -- By an order of the NKO, the assuming of the position of USSR People's Commissar of Defense by S. K. Timoshenko was announced.

7 May -- The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet promulgated the Ukase "On Establishing Military Ranks for Command Personnel of the Red Army and Navy."

30 May -- The Directive of the RKKA Political Directorate No 140 was published on increasing the attention paid by the political bodies and party organizations to the questions of combat training and the strengthening of military discipline.

20 June -- By an order of the NKO, the "Regulation on Mobilization Work of Troop Units, Headquarters and Facilities of the Red Army" was put into effect.

5 July -- By an order of the NKO, the Separate Red Banner Army was renamed the 1st Red Banner Army.

7 July -- The Directive of the RKKA Political Directorate No 184 was issued concerning the improved organization of the socialist competition in the army.

9 July -- By an order of the NKO, a sight for divebombing was commissioned for the RKKA Air Forces.

25 July -- The RKKA political bodies were transformed into directorates and sections of political propaganda. This reform is to be carried out in August in the Navy.

26 July -- By an order of the NKO, rank insignias were announced for the middle and senior command and political personnel of the RKKA.

26 July -- By an order of the NKO, the Higher Military Pedagogical Institute of the Red Army was organized.

12 August -- The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet promulgated the Ukase "On Strengthening One-Man Command in the Red Army and Navy."

28 August -- The Directive of the GUPP KA [Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army] No 20 was issued on reorganizing party political work in the aim of subordinating this to the tasks of increased combat readiness of the army and strengthening military discipline.

2 September -- By the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the marshal's insignia "Marshal's Star" was established.

16 September -- The Directive of the GUPP KA No 256 was issued on the certifying of army political personnel.

3 October -- By an order of the NKO, departments for the review of invention proposals was incorporated in the TOE of the RKKA GAU [Main Artillery Directorate].

9 October -- The Directive of the GUPP KA No 265 was issued on increasing the role of the press in improving troop combat training.

12 October -- By an order of the NKO, the Disciplinary Regulations of the Red Army were put into effect.

29 October -- By an order of the NKO, the Regulation Concerning Legal Consultants of the NKO Institutions was announced.

2 November -- By an order of the NKO, the Regulation for Chemical Defense of Food and Fodder was introduced.

2 November -- Personal military ranks were introduced for the rank-and-file and junior supervisory personnel of the Red Army.

4 November -- The Directive of the GUPP KA No 43 was issued on strengthening the responsibility of the army Komsomol organizations for giving recommendations to Komsomol members in joining the ranks of the VKP(b).

12 November -- By an order of the NKO, the decree of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] "On Abolishing the Military Council Under the USSR NKO" was announced.

19 November -- By an order of the NKO, the Manual for Registration of the RKKA Reserves was introduced.

6 December -- The "Regulation Governing the Lenin Room in the Red Army (Company, Squadron, Battery) was approved by the chief of the GUPP KA.

9 December -- By an order of the NKO, invention bureaus were organized under the chief of the RKKA GAU.

21-31 December -- At a meeting of the Main Political Council of the Red Army, questions were reviewed related to the further development of Soviet military art as well as the further improving of instruction and indoctrination of the troops.

27 December -- By an order of the NKO, the RKKA Air Defense Directorate was reorganized as the Main Directorate for Air Defense of the Red Army.

27 December -- By an order of the NKO, the regulation was announced on the challenge Red Banners of the Red Army for combat training.

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